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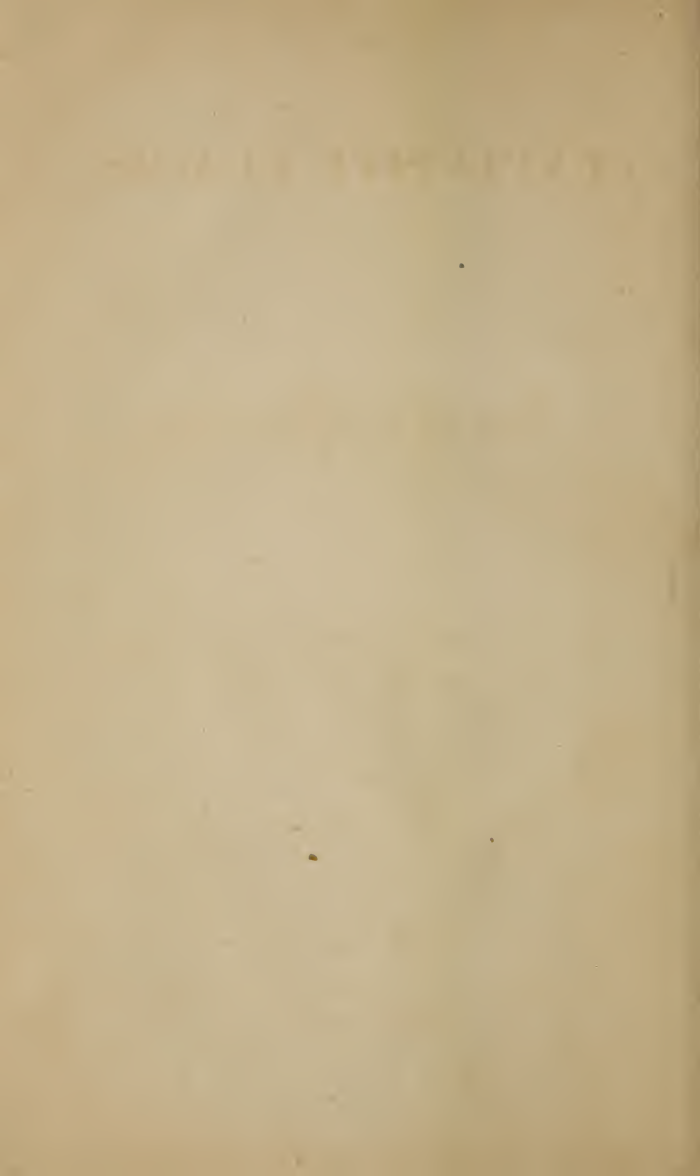
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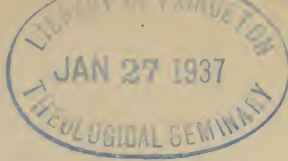
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THE



• EXCLUSIVE CLAIMS

OF

David's Psalms.

✓
BY WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE, A. M.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER, CORNWALLIS, N. S.



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PREFACE.

The following pages are merely a reprint, with a partial change of arrangement, and the addition of a few Notes, of a pamphlet published in the year 1834. The original publication had special reference to the practice of the Presbyterians of King's County, in the Province of Nova Scotia, among whom the author came to reside the previous year, and who formerly used Watts' Imitation of the Psalms of David, in conjunction with the Paraphrases appended to the Songs of Zion also, under the auspices of the Established Kirk of Scotland. The writer considers it one of the happiest circumstances of his life, that he was honoured by the Head of the Church to be instrumental in leading Presbyterians, within the sphere of his labours, to exclude the Songs of Watts and introduce those of the Sweet Singer of Israel, and that the fruit of his labour shall abide, whatever change may pass upon his position or his prospects.

The title of the original work,—“The Psalms of David, designed for standing use in the Church,”—did not express all that was intended by it; being quite consistent with the use of uninspired Songs together with the Psalms. The object of the writer was, and is, to shew that the Psalms of David are not only to be used in the celebration of the praises of God in the Church, but that they are to be used to the exclusion of all other songs; even such as are found in the Divine Word. To

many this position may appear so utterly extravagant that it does not deserve to be seriously entertained. There are men who seem to claim for themselves an intuitive perception of what is accurate in principle and correct in practice, whilst others recognise, before they form a decided judgment, the necessity of instituting a careful, or even a laborious investigation: and those, of course, cannot condescend to take any step which implies a doubt, I do not say of the infallibility of their own *judgment*, but of the justness of their own *opinion*.

An attempt to procure the introduction, into the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, of a Hymn Book, published under the sanction of the united Presbyterian Church of Scotland, led to the consideration of the propriety of bringing again into public notice the claims of Zion's Songs. There are ministers in that body, of clear heads and sound hearts, by whom the proposed innovation will be firmly opposed, not merely as an innovation, (of which no man ought to be afraid), but as an invasion of the purity of a Divine ordinance. Still, in a state of society where the general practice of the Church has remained long unquestioned, many grow up very little, if at all, acquainted with the principles by which the practice is sustained; and such are scarcely prepared to meet a challenge of its Scriptural character. Novelty always has charms, especially captivating to the young, and in the absence of accurate and adequate knowledge of its origination, the prejudice in favour of a custom easily yields to the gratification of the desire after what is new. The adversary elaborates his schemes in seasons of quiet security, and promulgates them, but not till the public mind has been leavened, and those who have fought a good fight have left their places to others, strangers at once to their trials and success. Joshua, and the Elders who outlived Joshua, must have entered into their rest, before the meretricious adornments of an idol

god can be successfully presented before the eyes of the people of Israel. We have reason to fear, from the absence of all public agitation of the subject of Psalmody, that there may be found among younger ministers, older ones who feel themselves already compromised, and that amongst the youth of the Church generally, some disposed to entertain favourably the proposal to introduce, at least as a companion of David's Psalms, a Hymn Book, which, if introduced at all, shall eventually be found claiming and taking possession of the whole house.

The writer does not apprehend a serious charge of unwarrantable interference in the matters of other churches, in consequence of putting forth his reasons, at this crisis, for adhering to the exclusive use of David's Psalms in the Church. It is a subject of deep regret, that the severance of Christian from Christian, arising out of a divided judgment upon a few points, more or less important, should interfere with their co-operation upon common ground. The Author recognises the duty and the privilege of such co-operation without the feeblest desire to cross a dividing line. *Every* individual, who loves the Truth for the sake of Him who is *True*, and loves Zion for the sake of Zion's King, will be found helping, by every Scriptural means, any other in the maintenance of a faithful testimony for a single article of revealed doctrine. His supreme respect for the Word of God must tread down the strongest sectarian predilections. And he has a right to expect the support of the other in striving for the faith of the Gospel. The subject of Psalmody, or the question, in particular, of the songs that may with propriety be sung in the social worship of God, is common: for there is no class of evangelical Christians, which does not recognise the song as a part of religious service; the *song*, whether it is sung by the assembled worshippers, by the choir, who make us forget the spirituality of the service in the captivating charms

of the music, or by the substitutionary hireling of a proud formalism.

The great body of Presbyterians in Nova Scotia,—indeed over all Christendom,—who use David's Psalms, use, in connection with them, Paraphrases of select portions of Scripture, or Hymns composed on distinct Scriptural topics. Now, as the firm conviction is submitted, with all deference, not to the dogmatism but to the reasonings, of those of the contrary part, that the *special* claims of the Songs of Zion must either be abandoned, or their *exclusive* claims maintained, the hope is entertained, that so soon as men of intelligence and piety find themselves shut up to the investigation of the topic, they shall be led to see the necessity of abandoning, or removing out of the way, a beautiful monument it may be, upon the wall, because it is found to interfere with the range of shot from guns, leveled for the defence of the city. Stranger things have happened, than that an attempt to supersede, or *elbow out*, the Songs of Zion, should eventually procure for them a more unrestricted liberty of the house of worship. That Hymn Books, having no claim to inspiration, attempting a forcible or a fawning entrance among Presbyterians, in being ejected, may carry Paraphrases with them, is a "consummation devoutly to be wished."

The introduction and general use of Watts' compositions never secured that general and interested attention to the momentous change involved, which might have been expected. What Watts never intended, when he inscribed, "The Psalms of David *Imitated*," upon his title page, his admirers and advocates have done; and by a most unwarrantable ruse, or equally unjustifiable inattention and ignorance, they claim for Watts a welcome, simply as a more elegant *versifier* of an inspired collection of songs.

In justification of the present appearance, it may not be out

of place here, to introduce a point which will be noticed in the body of the work, and pressed in the conclusion of it. Many of those who are the warmest advocates of an uninspired Psalmody, are also the forward advocates of union among Professors. It may be presumed, they wish to find men perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and to hear them speak the same things. Nothing could be more desirable. But in the advocacy of uninspired Hymns, are they not aware that, instead of removing obstacles out of the way, they are introducing and supporting a formidable obstacle to the accomplishment of the object they profess to have so much at heart? They pursue a course which renders what they labour to accomplish *impossible*. They shut the door of their Temple in the face of men, whom they have intreated to enter in; and who, on their part, make no requisition upon those who visit them, to comply with that against which their judgment testifies. A call to union is a solemn mockery, on the part of men who are sacrificing the unity of the Church to the enjoyment of what, viewing it most favourably, is a very doubtful privilege.

The whole argument of the following work may be expressed in very few words, thus—God has given to the Church, by inspiration, a collection of Songs of Praise. He has given but one. We plead the cause of those who say they are *satisfied with it*, against those who say, “It is *antiquated*, it is *unsuitable*, it is *too limited*, *we are not satisfied* ;” against those who object to it, on account of the garb in which it is exhibited; who choose to worship the golden calf, till Christ put off the purple robe and Crown of Thorns.

CORNWALLIS, N. S.,

May 1855.

INTRODUCTORY.

THAT it is the duty of Christians to celebrate the praises of God in the use of Songs, is too evident to him who is acquainted with the Holy Scriptures to require proof. The example of the old Testament Church, to which we shall have occasion to refer more particularly afterwards, the example of our Saviour, with his Apostles, who, the last Supper having been finished, sung a Hymn (1), the example of Paul and Silas when immured in the gaol of Philippi (2), and an Apostolic injunction, "Is any merry? let him sing Psalms" (3), are proofs sufficient of the correctness of ecclesiastical practice in every age, and of our obligation to walk in "the footsteps of the flock," in this solemn exercise. There are many circumstances which must render the celebration of praise an exercise peculiarly interesting to every citizen of Zion:—to him who is not merely a partaker of the form, but a subject of the power of Godliness. One only I shall mention. We enjoy more intimate fellowship with the spiritual world, and approach nearer to the

(1) Matt. xxvi. 30.

(2) Acts xvi. 25.

(3) James v. 13.

abodes of perfect happiness and uninterrupted peace. Praise is not, like many other religious acts, peculiar to this world, but lifts us up into the rank of Angels standing before the throne, and of the spirits of just men made perfect. The time shall come when we shall no more read and investigate the Word of God, when we shall cease to wait upon, or to exercise the ministry of reconciliation, when private and social prayer shall no longer be offered up, when Baptism and the Lord's Supper shall have been superseded, but praise shall never cease. Like Charity, its immediate fountain, it "never faileth." No sooner is the Saint removed from the "earthly house of this tabernacle," than he is introduced into the choir above, who rest not day and night ascribing praises to a God of Holiness, and singing the song of Moses, the Servant of the Lord, and the Song of the Lamb. Whoever desires to engage in an exercise adapted to promote oblivion of the trials and temptations, the privations and opposition, to which he is exposed in this present evil world, and to assist him in taking faith's realising view of the joys which are before the face, and the pleasures which are at the right hand of God, and which abide forever, let him engage in singing the praises of God.

But what are the Songs which the Saints ought to use? It is very obvious that God is not praised in the use of every song. There is a perverted use of the musical, as of all the other powers of man, by which God is dishonoured, not praised,—by

which he is offended, not pleased. If we ascribe to God in our Song, that which he does not claim for himself, if we exhibit a false view of the perfections of his character, of the doctrines of his word, or of the duty of man, instead of giving glory to God and being exercised according to Godliness, we are bestowing honour upon the creature of our own imagination, and ministering to the interests of error and corruption. The spirit and the language of the Song must harmonize with the object which is contemplated in singing it, otherwise the object is forfeited, if not entirely, at least in that degree, to which the poet has deviated from the proposed design. If these remarks be admitted (and I am not aware of any exception to which they lie open), it follows that we can duly praise an infinitely perfect God, only in the use of Songs which are infallibly correct, and if infallibly correct, such alone as have been given by the Spirit of the Highest. And when there are not songs supplied by the Holy Spirit, we must either be silent, or expose ourselves to the probable displeasure of the Lord, while we offer perhaps the blind or the lame in sacrifice.

Our present object is to strive to show that the Church is furnished with a collection of Songs by the spirit of inspiration, which is designed for her use in every age, and in every situation, and is no less adapted to every age and situation in which the Church may be found, than designed for her use. It is unnecessary to say, that the collection to which

I have reference, is that which forms a constituent part of the Old Testament, and is entitled THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

Our appeal, for a decision of the important question, respecting the matter of the Praises of God in the Churches, is to the Scriptures, and to the Scriptures alone. The question is neither what has been, nor what is, but what ought to be, the practice of the Church. Little importance can be attached to the practice of the ancient Church, even if it could be definitely ascertained; since the New Testament furnishes so many melancholy evidences, that, when the Apostles were yet alive, some of the churches had become corrupt both in doctrine and order; and the mystery of iniquity, which was destined to enslave the world and leave but an afflicted and poor remnant free, was already at work. Few have access to the means of minute information upon the subject of ancient and medieval customs; and the statements of general historians are, upon many points, hastily made, and to be received with much caution. Mosheim, for instance, informs us (1) that in the fourth century, "Among the public Hymns the Psalms of David were now received;" when the fact seems to be that *Psalmody*, as a part of the public service, was then first introduced into the western churches. The statement of Calvin is this (2): "Yet, that it (singing) was not universal, is proved by Augustine, who relates that in the time of Ambrose, the Church at Milan first adopted

(1) Inst. iv. chap. 4, § 4.

(2) First B. iii. chap. 20, § 32.

the practice of singing, when during the persecution of the orthodox faith by Justina, the mother of Valentinian, the people were unusually assiduous in their vigils ; and that the other western churches followed. For he had just before mentioned that this custom had been derived from the East."

It is true, that the argument about to be presented in this small production opposes, either wholly or partially, the very general practice of the Churches. Perhaps the only Churches which, as such, use the Psalms of David exclusively, in public worship, are the Associate and the Associate Reformed in the United States, original Seceders in Britain, and the Reformed Presbyterians in both the Eastern and Western Continents ; and what are they among the multitudes who absolutely exclude those Psalms, or use them with additions from various sources. If moral and Scriptural questions were to be decided by suffrage, the voice of the few who contend for the exclusive use of David's Psalms would not be heard amidst the loud acclamation of the overwhelming majority in favour of something else, or anything else, in the form of a devotional composition adapted to music. The argument derived from practice would just have been as good, as in the case before us, against the Apostles, against the Waldenses, against the Reformers. But Christians cannot bow before the idols of the nations, because they are outnumbered by Pagans ; and Protestants do not hold themselves bound to recognise the claims of the "man of sin," because his

adherents are more numerous than themselves. The voice of the multitude shall establish the right of Diana of the Ephesians to divine honours, and completely vindicate Pilate, in delivering Jesus to be crucified. As if to demonstrate the worthlessness of majorities, in the determination of a question of right, there never was a case, in which public opinion was better understood, or more unequivocally expressed, than when Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, concurred in dooming to an ignominious death, the man "who did no sin," all whose words were those of truth, and whose acts, in all his course, were in exact conformity to a perfect law. It argues a singular mental obtuseness, or moral obliquity, when professors of religion discover a disposition to tilt those who are opposed to them, by throwing majorities into the scale of evidence. They forget the Scripture doctrine that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and not subject to his law," that consequently "great men are not always wise," who attach special importance to talents, learning, or age and experience, independent of the moral qualification that has its origin in the renovated nature, in the settlement of the claims of the Lord Jesus, in his own house. As talented, as learned, as eloquent, as influential men as the world has ever seen, have been arrayed on the side of undisguised infidelity. The most destructive errors, and the most unscriptural institutes, can claim as supporters,

as originators, many who are enrolled with the great of the world,—of the Church.

Piety, genuine, unaffected *piety*, does not give to its possessor a right to take possession of the throne of judgment. There are none, whose attainments in knowledge are so elevated, that they do not admit of additions, tending to the communication of an increased impulse to intellectual exercise, to the removal of confused and incoherent conceptions, or to the rectification of the judgment, before under the influence of error. Sometimes also, the utmost indifference to precision of thought upon the most momentous subjects; an obstinate indolence, that shrinks from painful though necessary inquiry; and the most remorseless antipathy to moral opponents, may be discovered under the mask of a very specious devotionism. It was a saying of an aged and devoted preacher of the Gospel, and a close observer of men and things, that “The Devil always chooses sharp tools, because he can neither make a tool nor sharp it.”

The comparative claims of different versions of the Psalms of David, is a subject entirely independent of that which is proposed for discussion. The simple question is, *ought the Psalms of David to be exclusively used by the Church in the celebration of the praises of God?* (1) An inquiry into the merits of different versions, with a view to the adoption of one, supposes the determination of the former question in the affirmative.

The evidence which we purpose to bring forward in support of the proposition, that these Psalms were given of God for the use of the Church to the end of the world, in whatever country or in whatever age, rests upon the following four facts:

I. The Psalms were given by inspiration.

II. They were given to be sung by the members of the Church—the worshippers of God.

III. No subsequent book or books have been written by inspiration for the same purpose.

IV. The Book of Psalms is no less adapted to the present state of the Church, than to her state when they were originally written.

CHAPTER I.

Characteristics of Inspiration.

Before taking into consideration the inspiration of the Book of Psalms in particular, it may be profitable to premise an exposition of the characteristics of an inspired communication. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is assumed, according to the declaration of one of the Penmen. We write for the information of those, who admit that the title *Scripture* belongs to the writings of Prophets and Apostles; and that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

For information upon this point, we appeal to the sacred writings themselves. If they do not furnish either a direct statement of the discriminating features of inspired writing, or principles, from which a knowledge of its nature and properties may be legitimately deduced, it is useless to attempt the investigation of the subject. Conjecture would be presumptuous and vain, and knowledge beyond the limits of our research. We consider, however, that Scripture has not left the subject of inspiration under any cloud of obscurity. The following par-

ticulars are obviously presented to the view of him who reads with care the sacred volume.

1. The word of inspiration claims *God* for its *author*.

Is it historical? the selection, the arrangement, and the comments are God's. Is it doctrinal? the ideas, the reasonings, and the conclusions are God's. Is it practical? the precepts, exhortations, admonitions, warnings, are God's. And in each department, the language is such as God was pleased to employ, to express what he would have revealed to man. Is it prophetic? the matter and words are of necessity God's. In short, the Scripture claims God for its author in as high a sense as if man's instrumentality had not been employed in its publication; as if it had come to us by the hands of an angel, sent forth to distribute the volumes already written; as if every part of it had been delivered in the same manner with the decalogue, graven upon tables of stone by the finger of God, after having been pronounced without the intervention of human instrumentality, in the ears of all the people.

The *Scripture* and the *Word of God* are used as convertible terms: where the one is used the other may be used. "If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the *scripture* cannot be broken." (1) "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel." (2) The Apostle is here expressing

(1) John x. 35.

(2) Rom. ix. 6.

his grief for the unbelief and approaching separation of his Jewish brethren, by natural descent, Israelites : and to prevent any misconception respecting the promises of God made to Israel, and registered in the Scriptures, he states, in the conclusion of the verse, and proves in the subsequent verses, that the appellation Israel, does not properly belong to all who are of the Israelitish nation, and that consequently the truth of the *Scripture promise*, or of the *Word of God*, is not affected by the taking away of the Kingdom of God from some who might inherit, according to natural descent, the name Israel. When our Lord is called to answer for himself and his disciples, in neglecting the tradition of the elders, he replies, “Laying aside the *Commandment of God*, ye hold the tradition of men.” And again, “making the *Word of God* of none effect, through your tradition.” (1)

What holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost, is described as the *Word of God*. *The Word of God*, Samuel shewed to Saul. “*The Word of the Lord* came to Nathan.” “*The Word of God* came unto John in the Wilderness,” and it was the “*Word of God*” which Peter and John, being filled with the Holy Ghost, spake with those of their own company whom they joined, after their deliverance out of the hands of the chief Priests.

That God is, in the strictest sense of the word, the *author* of the Decalogue, will be readily admitted. Now the Scripture generally is ascribed to

(1) Mark vii. 8—13.

God, not only in terms equally strong, but in the very same terms in which the ten commandments are ascribed to him. The fact that the matter and words are his, is the same, whether the writing be executed by God immediately, or whether men be employed to perform the penmanship. Concerning the decalogue we read, "*God spake* all these words." "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand; the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (1)

Let us now hear what terms are used with reference to other portions of Scripture. "*God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets.*" (2) Communications were made to the fathers at sundry times, and in divers manners, and by different persons, but it was always God who *spake*. The prophets were the instruments by whom he caused his words to be heard. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of Salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as *he spake* by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." (3) "Whom the Heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which *God hath spoken* by the mouth of all

(1) Ex. xx. 1; xxxii. 15, 16.

(2) Heb. i. 1.

(3) Luke i. 68, 70.

his holy prophets since the world began." (1) "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost*, by the mouth of David *spake*—Well *spake the Holy Ghost* by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers." (2) "As the *Holy Ghost* saith, to day if ye will hear his voice." (3) How common the words, "Thus saith the Lord," by which the prophets introduce their addresses to the people! How striking the reproof which is directed against pretenders to inspiration who use their own tongues and say "He saith." The prophets possess no higher character than organs by which God was pleased to address the people. Divine communications are clothed in language divinely imparted. Mark the singular language of John the Baptist, when the "Jews sent Priests and Levites to ask him, who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him what then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? and he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." (4)

The Apostles of the Lord occupied the same place with the prophets. They were merely the instruments by whom God chose to communicate his will—to *speake his word*. The commission which they

(1) Acts iii. 21. (2) Acts i. 16; xxviii. 25. (3) Heb. iii. 7. (4) John i. 19—23.

received from the Son of God implies this. "Teaching them to observe all things, *whatsoever I commanded you.*" They must not, in the fulfilment of the important trust committed to them, depart from Jerusalem, till the spirit descend upon them from above, to teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, that they had heard from the Saviour while he was yet with them. They are not permitted to trust to the accuracy of their own judgment, nor to the strength of their own memory. The Apostles considered themselves so moved and directed that the words which they spake were of God, who put his Spirit within them. "When," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "ye received the *word of God which ye heard of us*, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the *word of God.*" And to the Galatians: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is *not after man.* For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by *the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Again to the Corinthians: "Since ye seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me.*" Let us now hear Peter. "The *word of the Lord* endureth forever. And this is the *word* which by the Gospel is preached unto you." "This second epistle, I now write unto you; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." In the latter verse he identifies himself and fellow Apostles with the holy prophets, in point of inspiration. Are

the disciples to be mindful of the words of the prophets? So are they to be mindful of the words of Apostles. Does the word uttered by a prophet proceed from God? So does the word of an Apostle.

More might be added, were it necessary, to shew that the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments implies, that their contents are just what God was pleased to communicate to us for our instruction, that they are exhibited in that order which God was pleased to adopt, and that they are expressed in the words which God chose to employ.

But it will be said in reply, that we also read,—*“Moses spake every precept to all the people according to the law.”* “The law was given by Moses.” *“David calls Messiah Lord.”* True; but Moses spake by the commandment of the Lord, and David was *in the Spirit* when he speaks of Messiah. That *“Isaiah said, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.”* True: but it is also said that the *Holy Ghost spake* this same word *by Isaiah* the prophet unto their fathers. That the *Apostles spake* with tongues. True; but they spake *as the Spirit gave them utterance. Holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost.* Consequently, the time when they spake, the words they uttered, and the ideas they communicated, were of the Spirit.

All the parts of Scripture are ascribed to the writers as *intelligent* instruments. The words of Moses, the words of David, the words of Jeremiah, are expressions, no less freely used than the word of God and the word of the Spirit. It is not supposed,

that, because men spake or wrote nothing but the words of God, they were irrational and involuntary, in speaking and writing. We cannot tell how God puts any of the means or instruments whom he employs into motion, for the accomplishment of his purposes ; one thing, however, we know, that he employs them all, except in very few instances, according to their proper nature. He has never spoken by man, as man speaks by a trumpet, inanimate and passive. Every part of his works, in earth and air and sea, is subject to his control, and may be employed to do his work. Still every thing acts according to the laws, to which, in its production and preservation, it has been subjected by the Creator.

A guilty world is to be made desolate for the sins of them that dwell therein. The Lord gives his commission to the clouds of heaven. They gather like armies mustering for the battle, and pour down their streams upon terrified thousands. The fountains of the deep burst forth, and unite their waters with those descending from above, to swell the deluge to the overwhelming of a degenerate and impious generation. The Kings who fought against the allies of Israel must experience a defeat, too signal to be accomplished by the forces led on by Joshua ; and God sends the hailstones down upon the retreating armies. He might have commanded them to execute his will, as balls discharged from the cannon's mouth, or stones projected from a sling, but this would have been contrary to the

natural law of their movement. Hailstones naturally descend. They derive their impetus from the power of gravitation, and no force, additional to that gathered in their descent, is required to destroy those on whom they fall. When fiery serpents are sent in among the Israelites, they bite the guilty tribes. There was needed no enchantment to allure them. "There came forth two she-bears from the wood and tare forty and two children of them" that mocked Elisha the prophet, and whom he had cursed in the name of the Lord. Were they not looking for their prey? Must we not suppose them led by instinct, prompted by hunger to make speed, allured, perhaps, by the shouts of youthful impiety, because God *sent them* to punish the children for their criminal amusement, and the parents for their neglect, in withholding an education in the fear of the Lord. It is natural for the rain and hail to fall, the serpent to bite, and the bear to rend; and when God makes them his instruments, they act according to their distinguishing properties and powers. When he employs man to execute his work, he brings him forward, upon the same principle, in the exercise of all his varied qualifications. Understanding, will, passions, affections, are exerted agreeably to natural laws, and the relations which they sustain, as different states of the same mind.

Ahab, King of Israel, goes up to Ramoth-Gilead, a doomed man; and in disguise. The King of Syria, with whom he fought, had commanded his soldiers to fight with none but the King of Israel;

and he is hidden. But God will draw him forth, and find an instrument to accomplish his words. A certain man,—he knew not the King of Israel, less that God had intimated that he should die in the field of battle, or that he should fall by his hand,—drew a bow at a venture. No supernatural vigour is imparted to his arm, no supernatural agency diverts the arrow from its direct course, but it was pointed to the King, perhaps to the only part of his person not protected by armour, enters between the joints of the harness, and makes way for the life's blood. In the whole transaction, that certain man acted by no compulsion, formed his resolution, executed his own will, shot at a venture: but either his purpose, his position, the direction of his arrow, with him altogether fortuitous, were precisely regulated by God of whom he was ignorant, or the prediction of him who knows the end from the beginning, was fulfilled by chance, and might never have been fulfilled. There is a very remarkable and conclusive example of the union of the efficient agency of God, with the freedom of the instrument by whom he acts, or of God's employing a human instrument, in the full, the free, and unconstrained exercise of all his faculties, in the case of Cyrus. God chooses Cyrus, Prince of Persia, to perform all his pleasure, even to the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. God foretells what shall be accomplished by Cyrus, long before he had an existence, or the captivity had commenced from which he was to set Israel free. Here is a simple

prediction. But God plainly informs us, that it is by his own agency it shall be accomplished, in the use of Cyrus's instrumentality. He will to the end contemplated, hold the right hand of his Shepherd, subdue nations before him, loose the loins of Kings, open the two-leaved gates, give him the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places. One thing must be evident, that the strength and perseverance of Cyrus, the subjection of nations to him, the terror of kings against whom he fights, the opening of the gates of Babylon to admit his army, the delivery into his hands of the accumulated treasures of the Assyrian capital, is the work of God. Till all these things were accomplished, Cyrus was ignorant of that God by whom he was directed and upheld. Lastly, in the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and in performing the work of God, all the parties, and Cyrus in particular, are regulated by principles congenial to their nature, education, habits, and character. Cyrus manifests, from his youth, a predilection for a military life. To his personal gratification, with the consent of his grandfather the king of Persia, hardly obtained by the urgent application of the ambassadors from Media, he sets out with the command of the Persian forces, ordered to the assistance of the Medes, at war with the king of Babylon and his allies. After a series of victories in their progress, the united armies of Media and Persia, under Cyrus and his uncle Darius, sit down before the capital of Assyria. Despairing of being able to overturn or

scale the walls of Babylon, the hope of entering the city upon the bed of the Euphrates, which ran through it, buoys up the youthful warrior. He cuts a canal, by which the waters of the river may be diverted from their course, that the channel within the city may be left dry. The night when the works were so far completed, that they might attempt an entrance, was the same in which Belshazzar made a feast to his thousand lords, his queens, and his concubines, and drank wine out of the hallowed vessels of the Lord's house. The sight of the fingers of a man's hand, writing the sentence of death to his power, upon the wall opposite to which he sat, fills his mind with dread, and his *loins are loosed*. It is probable that the lords, whose province it was to see the gates upon the river closed when night set in, were too much occupied in the revels of the feast to attend upon their duty. At all events, the gates, which might still have presented a difficult obstacle to the entrance of the allied armies, *were not shut*, and Cyrus enters in to possess the *treasures of darkness*. In the historical narrative, we perceive nothing but the vigour, the ambition, the heroism, and the skill of the youthful warrior, inspiring his followers with valour, perseverance, and love of glory, on the one hand ; on the other, the indolence and ease, springing from a confidential reliance upon the fortifications of the city. In the prophecy, we see nothing but the agency of the Most High ; and in the union of both, we are taught to contemplate the Sovereign

of the world using human beings as his instruments, in the exercise of all their powers, and agreeably to the principles upon which their character has been formed.

Proceeding one step farther, the God of Heaven is seen employing rational and voluntary instruments, according to the almost endless variety of personal character. The word of inspiration presents before us a most beautiful illustration of this part of Jehovah's agency. The variety of mental structure, of intellectual power, of modes of thinking, and of style, presented in the word of God, so far from militating, as has been frequently supposed, against the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scripture, is only the necessary result of a principle of divine operation from which every deviation is miraculous, and furnishes a clear and ample elucidation of that principle. The concession, therefore, that the thoughts and style of the different portions of Holy Writ, are distinctive of different writers, of different degrees of mental strength, and various modifications of mental operation, detracts nothing from the assertion of God's being the author of the whole, in the proper sense of authorship. (1)

2. The word of inspiration claims absolute *freedom from error*.

God being the author of the Book, whatever is imputed to it, is imputed to him. Impute an error to the word of God, and you impute it to himself.

But God cannot err, therefore whatever is written by inspiration must be free from error. Now inspiration is asserted of *all* scripture. This is the testimony which the scripture gives concerning itself, and if it be found a false witness in one particular, the testimony must be rejected in all. The Book which claims God for its author in every part, and is found to contain one false proposition, one unequivocal contradiction, must bear to have its claim denied. There is only one alternative to those to whom the scripture is presented. Let them choose between Deism, or the full admission of the truth of every proposition, which the word of God contains. We must, however, always distinguish between the word of God, and the principles which may have been deduced from it; which are often what the word does not warrant, and shocking indeed. (1)

3. The word of inspiration is free from *defect*. Imperfection is as foreign from the character of God as error. "God's law is perfect," says the Psalmist. The scriptures are fully adequate to the end contemplated by them; every part, to the end contemplated by it. They are "able to make wise unto salvation,—profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto *all good works*." The Word is free from defect, or the Apostle is found a false witness.

4. The word of inspiration contains nothing *superfluous*.

It is true there are portions of the word of God, the use of which, as of many tribes of living creatures, we are at present unable to discover. But is any man prepared to say that the purpose to which they are subservient, neither has been known, nor shall by the progress of events be developed to the view of the church? There would be more presumption than prudence and piety in the assertion, that anything in the word of God must be superfluous because we cannot discover its use. A spiritual view of the character of God, and the reverence which that view must inspire, will lead us to the conclusion that as God never exerts immediately his power, when means are adequate to the proposed end, so he never puts forth his power either in the use or independently of means, when there is no object to be secured. A plain testimony should outweigh a whole volume of speculations, and constrain us to plead ignorance in the presence of infinite wisdom. A plain testimony we have to the universal utility of the inspired record. "*All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable*." And again, "*Whatsoever* things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. (1) *Paul* saw no portion of revelation superfluous—no part of the Old Testament, in which the refinement of modern times

(1) Rom. xv. 4.

has discovered much neither conducive to edification, consistent with delicate feeling, nor exhibiting the mild spirit of Christ. "*Whatsoever* things were written aforetime," whatever judgment profanity, folly, or *affected* spirituality may form of them, "were written for our learning." He finds instruction in the minute record of the sins and sufferings of the Israelites in the wilderness. Some were idolaters. "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. Some committed fornication, and fell in one day, three and twenty thousand." Some of them tempted Christ, and "were destroyed of serpents." Some of them murmured, and "were destroyed of the destroyer." What have we to do with all these things? The Apostle will inform us "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1)

5. The word of inspiration is *authoritative*.

That a work should be written upon any given scientific subject, or a history, without an error, a defect, or a redundant expression, is not beyond the range of possibilities: yet would not men, supposing it written, be under an obligation to receive or to read it. The knowledge of its contents might not be necessary to the regeneration of man's character, or the purification of his life;—it might never contemplate such a result. The word of God is given for that end:—is subordinate to the refor-

(1) 1 Cor. x. 6—11.

mation, and to the happiness of man, not only in this world, but in the future state. The design for which it was written gives it a claim; and when its Author, who requires us to purify our hearts, to cleanse our hands, to be perfect, and its infallibility and perfection are considered in union with its design, it makes a demand upon our reception, which cannot be resisted without sin against God. To every man, to whom the word of God is presented, it proclaims, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned"—is condemned. Unfeigned faith, it must be evident to the unprejudiced and attentive reason, is something more than a mere historical belief of what is written, but it always implies a historical belief. No speculative unbeliever can be a faithful man, for the great object upon which faith terminates is brought to view by the word of God alone. The degree of saving faith will be measured by the extent to which the divine testimony is known and embraced; and therefore faith will be obstructed in its exercises and growth, by opposition to that testimony in any the least particular. "All Scripture is profitable." Therefore the advantage to be derived from it must fail, in so far as it is rejected. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (1) They are not charged with a disbelief of all that the prophets had written, but with not believing it *all*:—not with total but partial disbelief. The consequences of their partial

(1) Luke xxiv. 25.

disbelief were, a suspension of the sanguine hopes they had fondly cherished, that Christ would redeem Israel,—“ We *trusted* that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel”—and a withholding of credence from competent witnesses of the resurrection.—“ But *him* they *saw not*.” Therefore the Saviour says, “ Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think (are assured) ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.”

Our assent is demanded to every part of the Scripture alike. The inspiration which is asserted of all, is asserted of the several parts which constitute the whole. Whatever authority is derived from inspiration, belongs to everything which is inspired. The Saviour has given his sanction to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms ; and should man refuse his assent to any part of Moses’ writings, the Prophets, or the Psalms, he sets at nought the Saviour by whom the whole is sanctioned. What may appear little to man has the same high attestation with that which appears great. When God has not parcelled out his word, according to its supposed degrees of authority, importance and utility, for man to take a distinction of its parts, into more or less authoritative, important, and useful, for granted is impious ; taking it for granted, to attempt to make the division is vain.

It is rebellion against the authority which the words of inspiration claim, to bring an inspired statement to the test of reason, before it will be admitted, and only to receive it because reason has

pronounced a decision in its favour. We must receive it without question, without examination, because God has spoken it. The Deity will not permit his creatures to debate with him. He proclaims a fact, and it must be admitted without hesitation ; he issues a command, and it must be obeyed ; conceding the truth of the former and the justice of the latter, or the truth and authority of God are denied. If revelation is to be subject to reason, it is unnecessary. If reason can decide upon the character of revealed facts, doctrines, precepts, they must be within the sphere of her investigations. But as revelation brings to view, what man, in the exercise of reason, never could have discovered, reason cannot try the merit of the discoveries which have been made. These must be estimated according to the character of the author. In regard to revelation, reason's province is to ascertain the import of what is written ; her duty, if any of her supposed discoveries or deductions be found to clash with inspired statements, to give them up as imaginary and false, that every thought may be brought into subjection to the testimony of God.

Our final, our only appeal, for the determination of all controversies on the doctrinal or practical subjects of religion is to the Scriptures. They speak with authority. The reason why many controversies in the church remain undecided is, probably, that there has not been a simple appeal to Scripture : that men have been unwilling to have Revelation sit alone upon the judgment seat. They

would associate another, or others, with her. She knows not to falter in deciding upon any case coming within her province ; but obstacles are presented to the reception of her clear decisions, difficulties are raised, and her judgments are embarrassed by the delays, the opposition, and the vacillation, of those with whom she is unrighteously compelled to sit in judgment. One appeals to revelation *and* tradition ; another to revelation *and* the fathers ; a third to Scripture *and* reason ; and a fourth sets revelation behind the scenes, and will only permit us to hear her sentence as it is reported by the church. Her competency has also been brought into question by folly urging her to decide in cases which should never have come before her tribunal. The authority, however, of Scripture is not affected by the perverse proceedings of men. Its voice is still heard, amidst the tumult of contending partisans, proclaiming, "To the Law and to the Testimony."

The Saviour and his Apostles teach us, by examples, in what manner we should appeal to Divine testimony. They bring forward the book, and permit it to speak for itself. They never depart from the simple and obvious import of the words. They do not varnish them by explanations accommodated to the views designed to be exhibited. They take it for granted that they are intelligible ; that they need only to be read to be understood by all who are not prepossessed. They do not dishonour God, by acting as if they would say that he had given a

revelation in which the words employed are not adapted to convey the ideas intended. The most profound submission to its authority appears in every appeal to Scripture, by Christ and his Apostles. "Have ye not read that which was spoken to you of God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" He does not begin by explaining what is meant by being the God of Abraham, and then proceed to reason from the explanation. He at once fixes upon the language employed—upon the use of the present tense, "*I am.*" According to the opinions of the Sadducees, to whom he replies, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob had ceased to exist, when the words cited by our Lord were uttered. But God cannot be the God of a nonentity. That Abraham lived to God, even when Moses was in Horeb, is therefore evident; and it implies the preservation and resurrection of the body an integral part of the man. The people felt the force of the argument at once, and the Sadducees are confounded. (1) "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are Gods?" Without waiting to shew them why men, or what men are called Gods, he seizes upon the obvious fact, that those to whom the word of God came are so called, and reminds them that the Scripture cannot be broken. (2) Jesus might have furnished an exposition quite as authoritative as the text; but when he appeals to the text, he must simply hear what it says, and, according to a very useful rule,

(1) Matth. xxii. 23—33.

(2) John x. 31—36.

too much overlooked by some divines, *judge of what it means by what it says*. The same example is set before us by Apostles. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?" (1) "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?—Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (2) Thus, does he quote, without adding any comment for the purpose of giving a supposed fixedness and determination to the language; even in cases where many might be ready to suppose an explanation necessary to show the pertinence of the quotation, and infidelity has charged him with inconclusive reasoning, its perversity and blindness preventing it from discovering the bearing of the argument. Hear James. "Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace: Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (3) And Peter. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." (4) Whenever Christ or his Apostles appeal to the Scripture, they do it with the most implicit deference and submission, and teach us to consider its decision final. (5)

(1) Gal. iv. 21, 30
(4) 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

(2) Heb. i. 5, 8.
(5) Note D.

(3) Jas. iv. 5, 6.

CHAPTER II.

Are the Psalms given by Inspiration?

THE FIRST FACT which we are to ascertain is, that the Book of Psalms was written by Holy Men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost.

Concerning it, Gray, in his "Key to the Old Testament," thus writes: "The Book of Psalms, which in the Hebrew is entitled *Sepher Tehillim*, the Book of Hymns or Praises of the Lord, contains the productions of different writers. These productions are called, however, the Psalms of David, because a great part of them were composed by him, who for his peculiarly excellent Spirit was distinguished by the title of Psalmist. Some of them were penned before, and some after the time of David, but all of them by persons under the influence of the Holy Ghost, since all were judged worthy to be inserted into the Canon of Holy Writ. Ezra probably collected them into one book, and placed them in the order they now preserve, after they had been previously collected in part."

It is, however, a question of little comparative importance at what time, or by what person the Psalms were collected and arranged. One thing is

certain, they had been collected and arranged before the time of our Lord and his Apostles. They are designated a *Book* by our Lord himself. His words are—"David himself saith in the Book of Psalms;" showing that when he sojourned among men, the Songs of Zion had been collected into one volume. Paul, in one instance, quoting from a Psalm, mentions the place in the collection which it occupies. "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the *second* Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." No other proof is wanted that the collection of Psalms or Hymns which the Jews had in the days of our Saviour, is the same that we possess.

To the inspiration of this Book our Lord has given his testimony; and placed it, by his authority, upon the same footing with the other portions of the Old Testament. "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the *Psalms*, concerning me." (1) Here is a pointed reference to the classification of the Scriptures which the Jews made, and a place is assigned to the Psalms, no less elevated than to Moses or the Prophets. Now, since "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," the Psalms demand our submission, as the dictates of the Holy Ghost, in the same peremptory tone with the Law, which was promul-

(1) Luke xxiv. 44.

gated, without the intervention of man, from the top of Sinai ; we must receive them as equally profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, to promote the perfection of the man of God, with any other portion of Holy Writ.

The full extent to which the Son of God recognises the claim of the Book of Psalms, appears from the language which he employs, when speaking of a part. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David *in Spirit*, or *by the Holy Ghost*, call him Lord?" It was neither arrogant nor blasphemous, therefore, in David to utter the following very definite language: "*The Spirit of the Lord spake* by me, and *his word* was in my tongue." (1) His Son and Lord has pronounced it just. Paul has followed the example of his Lord in the ascription of the Psalms, not to man, but to the Holy Ghost. When he quotes the ninety-fifth Psalm, he introduces the quotation by these very emphatic words, "As the Holy Ghost saith." And Peter, before the day of Pentecost, standing up in the midst of the congregated disciples, says, "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost spake* by the mouth of David;" and on the day of Pentecost, addressing the wondering multitude, calls David a Prophet in reference to the production of the sixteenth Psalm. To use the words of Gray, who has been already quoted, "The authority of those

(1) Matth. xxii. 42, 43; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

(Psalms) which we now possess, is established likewise, by many intrinsic proofs of inspiration. Not only do they breathe through every part a divine spirit of eloquence, but they contain numberless illustrious prophecies that were remarkably accomplished, and are frequently appealed to by the evangelical writers."

In addition to the preceding evidence that the Psalms sustain a character equal to that of any other part of the Old Testament Scripture, and come to us recommended by the same high sanction, let it be observed, that Peter teaches us that the writings of the Apostles possess no greater authority, are distinguished by no more intrinsic excellence, make no larger demand upon our veneration, diligent perusal, and personal application, than Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Adverting to the writings of his "beloved brother Paul" he says, "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the *other Scriptures*, unto their own destruction." It is true he puts forward the writings of Paul as *Scripture*, but in the same rank with the other Scriptures. So far, however, from teaching us to give to them a preference, his manner of introducing them to notice, forms a sufficient answer to any, who might be disposed to neglect Moses or David, Isaiah or Ezekiel, in the presence of the historians of Jesus, of the Apostle of the Gentiles, or of the beloved disciple.

I have been the more particular in specifying and

proving the inspiration of the Book of Psalms,—that the writers of the Psalms were holy men of God, who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,—because this fact once established and received, one of the most daring objections that have ever been made to the use of the Psalms of David, is at once and forever removed out of the way of every man who respects the character of his God and his Redeemer,—of the Spirit who renews and infuses every good disposition. It has been objected that those Psalms, in many parts, breathe out cruelty, and contain language which it hardly becomes the lips of a Christian to utter ; it has been insinuated that the spirit of many of them is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, which dictates love to our enemies. (1)

Now, if the Psalms have been dictated by the Holy Ghost—if by the Spirit of Christ, who speaks not of himself, but speaks what he hears, the character of the author determines the character of the Book. An unholy person may assume the character, and speak the words of purity ; a man of cruelty may write a book and transcribe in it the language of clemency and mercy ; but a holy and a merciful man never can be supposed, without supposing a contradiction, to employ language impure and malicious, and calculated to excite or cherish impurity and revenge in the hearer or the reader. Whoever, therefore, thinks he discovers cruelty and revenge, or any other antichristian principle, set forth and

(1) Note E.

encouraged in the Book of Psalms, must either deny that it has been given by inspiration, or admit that he totally misunderstands its spirit, its language, and its tendency. If the objection before us be founded in truth, the Book must be expunged from the Bible. Its pretensions are spurious, and its presence is a stigma upon the character of God. But we have already seen that its claims are supported by the same authority which sanctions the other Scriptures, and that the denial of its inspiration involves the rejection of the Old Testament and the New. If God, the author, be holy, there is nothing unholy in the Book of Psalms, or calculated to encourage unholiness; if God be merciful, there is nothing in it inconsistent with mercy, or calculated to encourage cruelty; if God be love, there is nothing in it contrary to the spirit of love, or calculated to encourage hatred or revenge; in one word, there cannot be anything in the Book opposed to any perfection of the Divine character, or failing to recommend conformity to God upon the part of man. Whoever, therefore, quarrels with the spirit or matter of the Psalms, sets himself in opposition, not to man, but God, for he implicitly imputes to God, whatever he charges upon his word.

Or again. The inspiration of the Psalms and of the New Testament, being taken for granted, if the Psalms do not manifest the same spirit, inculcate the same doctrines, enjoin the same moral duties, prohibit the same sins, which are set forth in the New Testament, it follows that the Holy Ghost is

inconsistent with himself. But it would be no difficult matter to show that the spirit, the doctrines, the precepts, the prohibitions—in a word, the design and tendency of both are the same. And we know that the old Testament saints—we know that David possessed and exemplified that very character which the Gospel of Christ recommends. Will any man venture, upon mature consideration, to set declarations from the pen of David, especially remembering that it was guided by the Spirit of God, the expression of whose inflexible justice, of whose detestation of sin, of whose determination to punish it,—to all which holy men of God have been enabled—to which David was enabled to say Amen,—he may have mistaken for the language of unforgiving cruelty;—will any man venture to set declarations, the spirit and design of which may be misunderstood, in opposition to facts? Are malignity and revenge rashly to be imputed to the man, who found his enemy in a cave,—his enemy who had attempted his life, who was at that moment in pursuit of him, attended by three thousand men, that he might overtake and kill him,—and would not put forth his hand against his person, though urged by his followers? Will we attribute malignity and revenge to him who, coming into the camp of his adversary by night, and finding him and his men asleep, neither injured him nor would permit another to do it, though solicited, and could show the sword and cruise of water which he had carried away from his head, a testimony at once of his own

power to have taken revenge, and of the simplicity and ingenuousness of his temper and conduct? Was the man malignant and revengeful, who, when an ungrateful rebel in the day of adversity cursed him and vilified his character, could say, profoundly resigned to the award of Heaven, "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." And shall we join with the many who have conspired to vilify the character and the words of the Sweet Singer of Israel, even at the hazard of charging the Spirit of Christ with want of consistency? God forbid. Rather let us submit every thought, every feeling, in the presence of infinite wisdom, and be prepared to pluck out the right eye, or to cut off the right hand, which offends us.

But it has happened most felicitously, in relation to the question before us, that the Psalms most obnoxious to the censures of a spurious, and an unsanctified sentimentality, have been cited by an Apostle as the language of the Spirit. The sixty-ninth and hundred-and-ninth would seem, when approached by the opponents of the Old Testament Psalms, to excite more than common heat. I shall produce a few verses from each. "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." (1) "Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand.

(1) Psalm lxi. 25, 27, 28.

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned : and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few ; and let another take his office.” (1) Admitted : the language is strong. All may not be able to reconcile it with other declarations and petitions. Are they who cannot, at liberty to conclude that it is really inconsistent with love to our enemies ? Let us hear how Peter speaks of those Psalms. “ Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost* by the mouth of David *spake* before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For it is written in the Book of Psalms : Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and his bishoprick let another take.” (2) Of the twentieth verse the former member is from the sixty-ninth, and the latter from the hundred-and-ninth Psalm. Observe, (first) he views both as prophetic ; (second) he pronounces both spoken by the Holy Ghost. Of course both must be in all points correct, worthy of a merciful God, and becoming the lips of a servant of God, though no man were able to explain them.

Once more, and I dismiss this branch of the inquiry. Is such language as this cruel ? “ Cut them off in thy truth.” “ I will bring again from the depth of the sea ; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of enemies, the tongue of thy dogs in the same.” “ Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” Is it inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel ? to use

(1) Psalm cix. 6—8.

(2) Acts i. 16, 20.

it with the character of the Christian? Mark the consequences. Then the words of Paul, moved by the Holy Ghost, not merely writing to the church, but to a bishop of the church, must share in the same condemnation. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works." (1) If the spirit manifested in such portions of the Psalms as those quoted be unchristian, by what spirit shall we say the Apostle was actuated? If the Psalms be inconsistent with the Gospel, then Paul must be inconsistent with himself, for in the sixteenth verse we read, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Let him who is straitened in the use of some portions of Zion's songs, explain the consistency of the fourteenth and sixteenth verses of the fourth chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, and he shall find himself near an enlargement. Another consequence follows. The saints enter into the regions of love and peace, with all the cruelty and revenge of earth about them. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Finally, God must delight in carnage, and be chargeable with encouraging cruelty in his people. The great God

(1) 2 Tim. iv. 14.

has a supper, to which the fowls of heaven are invited, that they may "eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, free and bond, both small and great." "I heard," says John, "another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people." This must be the voice of God himself, for who else claims the saints for his own? And what does the voice proclaim in addition to a call to come forth from among the children of mystical Babylon? "Reward her even as she has rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." (1)

Reader, are you fully satisfied with the spirit and the language of Paul, of the spirits of just men made perfect, of angels, and of the great God himself? Then why should you be offended with the son of Jesse?

(1) Rev. vi. 10; xviii. 4—6; xix. 17, 18.

CHAPTER III.

Were the Psalms given to the Church that they might be sung to the praise of Him by whom they were dictated?

HAVING shewn the full and unqualified recognition of the Book of Psalms by Christ and his Apostles, and the necessary inference from the reality of its inspiration, that every insinuation against the spirit, the language, or the tendency of the collection, is an insinuation dishonouring to the character of God, involving a charge of inconsistency against his word, and implicitly impeaching those who have already entered into the places in their father's house prepared for them, with a want of the due measure of Christian Charity, we proceed to the examination of the *second fact* bearing upon the important inquiry respecting the Psalmody of the Church of Christ,—that

The Psalms were given *to be sung* by the members of the Church,—the worshippers of God.

The truth of this proposition appears from the titles given to them, and the manner in which they were used in the Jewish Church by divine appointment.

The Hebrew language has long since ceased to be spoken by a separate people, and that minute acquaintance with its structure is, we presume, irrecoverably lost, which might enable us to distinguish between prose and verse from the quantity and arrangement of the syllables, as we can in the Greek and Latin and modern tongues. Several have attempted to reduce the Hebrew versification to certain rules; but it is generally considered that they have utterly failed. Josephus, however, unequivocally states that the Psalms were written in metre. When making mention of them and other poetical portions of Holy Writ, he speaks like a man to whom Hebrew versification, the distinction between verse and prose, and the distinction between one species of verse and another, were perfectly familiar. His translator either thought or affects to think that Josephus rather spake in accommodation to the ideas of Greeks and Romans, than from any precise acquaintance with the metrical rhythm of Hebrew poetry: perhaps for no better reason than the improbability of the author of the Jewish antiquities being in possession of a species of knowledge which is beyond the reach of the Philologists of later and more exalted days. For this very reason, DeWette, a German writer, expresses a doubt of the existence of a Hebrew metre, and adduces Michaelis as of the same opinion. "Were there," says he, "a Hebrew metre, I believe that the vestiges and proofs, if not the very laws of it, might be discovered." Having given a narra-

tive of the exodus from Egypt and the passage through the Red Sea, Josephus adds, "Moses also composed a song unto God containing his praises in hexameter verse." (1) Again; with reference to the song which Moses is said to have written and taught to the children of Israel immediately before his decease, he says, "After this he read to them a poetic song, which was composed in hexameter verse; and left it to them in the Holy Book; it contained a prediction of what was to come to pass afterwards." (2) But, in particular respecting the Book of Psalms, "And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God of several sorts of metre: some of those which he made were trimeters, and some were pentameters: he also made instruments of music, and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the Sabbath Day and on other Festivals." (3) Whatever may be the value attached to it, at all events the testimony of the Jewish historian is sufficiently perspicuous and pointed.

The names, however, appropriated to the collection clearly indicate its character and use. The title *Psalms*, which is a Greek word introduced into the English language through the Latin medium, is derived from *Psallo*, to *sing*, and teaches us that the compositions distinguished by it were designed to be set to music. The Psalms of David are called also the "Songs of the Lord," and the

(1) B. II. c. 16. s. 4.

(2) B. IV. c. 8. s. 44.

(3) B. VII. c. 12. s. 3.

“Songs of Zion.” “So the number of them which which were brethren that were instructed in the Songs of the Lord, all that were cunning, was two hundred four score and eight.” (1) “There they that carried us away captive required of us a *song*: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, *sing* us one of the *songs* of Zion.” (2) These titles given to the collection, appear to point to its design,—its design according to the Spirit who dictated its different pieces.

That these Psalms were sung by the Old Testament Church, with Divine approbation, in her solemn religious assemblies, hardly requires proof. It is evident that the Jews, who were carried away to Babylon, had been accustomed to sing them in their native land, from their pathetic exclamation, provoked by the demand, it may have been of curiosity, it may have been of insolence, to which reference has already been made. “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” The days of mirth and festivity which they spent together at Jerusalem, when the assembled tribes feasted and sung before the Lord, and tuned their harps to his praise, had passed away. Sorrow and sighing and tears had succeeded. They are in the midst of strangers, who had sacked their beloved city, defaced and plundered, and finally laid in ruins their boasted temple, slain their nobles, made their king a captive, put into their hands the cup of poverty, of affliction and of slavery. Their hearts

(1) 1 Chron. xxv. 7.

(2) Ps. cxxxvii. 3.

are no longer open to receive pleasure from the joy-inspiring song and the accompanying tones of the well-tuned instrument. The full swell of the gladdening sounds would only have increased their bitterness of spirit, from its association with the repose and happiness of days now gone. Their harps, so frequently in requisition, before the invader had entered in among them, are suspended upon the willows by the brink of the river of Babylon, and only utter the hollow sounds of melancholy moaning, as their chords vibrate in the breeze.

It would seem from the history of the children of Israel, that the arrangements for singing the praises of God, were brought to a greater degree of perfection, by the instrumentality of David, who contributed so largely, by the Holy Spirit, to the Songs of Zion, as to acquire the honorable appellation of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and to give his name to the Book of Psalms. The number of those who were appointed of the King to the service of God in the celebration of praise, vocally and by instruments, including Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, who presided, were two hundred and eighty-eight, whom he divided into twenty-four orders or classes, and who had their places assigned to them by lot. They used the songs which form *part* of the present collection. The book was not completed till long after the days of David. On the very solemn and joyful occasion of the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom, to the tent which David had erected for its reception, certain of the Levites were

appointed to precede the ark, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel; and the King put into the hand of Asaph, who was their chief, and of his brethren a psalm to be sung by them, which is contained in the sixteenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles. The verses, beginning with the eighth and ending with the twenty-second, constitute the first fifteen verses of the one hundred and fifth Psalm; those beginning with the twenty-third and ending with the thirty-third, constitute the ninety-sixth Psalm; the thirty-fourth verse of the chapter is the same with the first of the one hundred and sixth Psalm, and the thirty-fifth and sixth form the concluding two verses of the same, a few verbal variations excepted. We know for what purpose this song was written; we know that it constitutes part of a collection of songs, to which the head of the Church has given his unqualified sanction. The conclusion is by no means difficult. The purpose for which it was given determines the design of the Spirit in the collection of songs with which it is numbered. In the absence of all opposing testimony, it appears that the songs of Zion, forming the Book of Psalms, were given by the Spirit to be sung by the Church, and were sung.

But there is another Psalm, written upon a particular occasion, concerning which we are informed, and which we mention for a reason that shall appear presently. The Psalm which David spake unto the Lord, in the day when the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the

hand of Saul, and which is found in the second book of Samuel (1), is the eighteenth of the sacred collection of songs.

There is a passage in the second book of Chronicles which casts much light upon the divinely authorised practice of the people of Israel, in relation to the Psalmody which they used in the worship of God. During the reigns of the kings who preceded Hezekiah, the Israelites had corrupted themselves exceedingly. Their kings encouraging them by their example, they worshipped the gods of the nations. The temple was spoiled and shut up by Ahaz, while he multiplied altars to strange deities. When Hezekiah ascended the throne of his ancestors, he set his heart upon the restoration of the purity of divine service. The temple is once more opened and sanctified at his injunction, with all its sacred furniture. The rulers of the city, being called together, offer sacrifice for their own sins and the sins of the kingdom. The king "set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets." (2) And while the burnt offering was being consumed upon the altar, all the congregation worshipped, and singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. "Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord, with the

(1) xxii.

(2) 2 Chron. xxix, 25—80.

words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped." By these verses are taught the three following particulars:—First, That it was part of the worship of God's house to sing praise; second, That what David did in ordering the public service, and appointing proper persons, instructed in the songs of the Lord, to sing praise, was by the command of the Lord, and not after his own will or his own wisdom; and third, That the words of David and Asaph or the words of inspired men were used. The manner, therefore, in which the words of David and of Asaph were used in the worship of God, every part of whose service is prescribed by himself, is a proof of the design of the spirit in moving them to write. The spirit moved them to write songs, and commanded the people to sing their words.

The celebration of praise according to the order sanctioned by Him to whom praise is to be ascribed, which was necessarily suspended during the melancholy period of the Babylonish captivity, was afterwards restored in due form by Nehemiah. The chief of the Levites, with their brethren, are appointed to their proper place "to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication both with thanksgiving and

with singing, with cymbals, psalteries and with harps." (1) .

There is a circumstance which is deserving of particular attention, as it appears to teach that the Psalms which, in a collective form, constitute a portion of divine revelation, were not only designed to supply the matter of the church's praise under the Jewish dispensation, but embrace all that God dictated for that purpose. Several songs composed on particular occasions have no place assigned to them in the Book of Psalms. Such are the Songs of Moses, composed when the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea, and immediately before his removal from their head; David's pathetic lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; the Song of Deborah and Barak after the defeat of Sisera; the Song of Hannah when she came to present her son Samuel before the Lord at Shiloh; the Song of Hezekiah after his recovery from his sickness, with several others. Be it remembered, that the collection of the Psalms into one book must have been the work of inspiration no less than their composition, otherwise the Saviour never would have given them his sanction in their present form. Since, of the songs interspersed through the different parts of the Old Testament, some are inserted into the Book of Psalms and several are passed by, it naturally occurs to ask what the ground of distinction is, between those which have been omitted, and such as have been incorporated with the Songs of

Zion. This question can only be solved by a determination of the particular purpose for which the collection of inspired songs was made. If we suppose the collection made with the view of setting before the church, the Psalms that should be used in the celebration of praise, it becomes easy to determine why some Psalms found already written in the Book of God are inserted and others are not inserted: a circumstance which we could not explain in a satisfactory manner, upon any other supposition.

The design for which certain Psalms have been collected into one volume was not to *preserve*, for the use of the church, *all the songs* composed by holy men of God moved by the Holy Ghost. In that case, there would have been no necessity for inserting any Psalm which had already found a place in the inspired record. The introduction of such must be considered a very unprofitable repetition. But, as we have already observed, the eighteenth Psalm is to be found in the second book of Samuel, the ninety-sixth, part of the hundred and fifth and a few verses of the hundred and sixth, are to be found in the second book of Chronicles.

The design was not to *bring together the detached productions of one inspired penman*. The Psalms are the productions of various writers, from the days of Moses, to whom the ninetieth Psalm is generally ascribed, till the time of Ezra, subsequent to the return from Babylon.

The design was not to *furnish one complete view*

of inspired songs. Then there would not have been any of the omissions to which I have before referred.

There remains only one other supposition of which I am aware—that the church might be furnished with such a collection as contained the Psalms designed for regular and standing use, in her public and social services; and that the error might be prevented, either of inadvertently introducing some, though inspired, not intended for general and permanent use, or of omitting some designed for social worship, and adapted to that end. The admission of a song into the Scripture may, or may not, infer its inspiration; but its admission into the Book of Psalms proves at once its inspiration and adaptation, according to the mind of the spirit, to the services of the sanctuary: the exclusion of one from the general collection, whilst it does not invalidate its claim to inspiration, seems to show that its use *as a song* was private and temporary. (1)

But perhaps more than enough has been said to prove that the Book of Psalms was written with the intention of being sung by the church, to the praise of Him by whom they were indited. Is it, then, too much, to infer that an *inspired* collection of psalms or hymns was necessary? that the wisdom of man was not adequate to the task of producing such songs as might be sung without fear in the presence of a holy and a jealous God? that

the important work of writing for the church in her holy exercises of praise could not be intrusted even to the new creature, so long as the law in the members is warring against the law in the mind, and leading into captivity to the law of sin and death? and that, therefore, God has perfected, having expressly required his people to sing praise, that which was too great for weak men, too sacred that it should be exposed to the impress of an unclean hand?

A heathen poet, writing respecting the machinery and composition of dramatic works, lays down this very judicious rule:—

*“Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit.”*

“Let not a God be introduced, unless a crisis shall have arrived which is worthy of his interference.” In other words: A God should never be brought forward, when there is not something to be performed which man is unable to accomplish. The idea, expressed by a man brought up in ignorance of the lively oracles of God, addicted to the idolatries of Rome, and of a licentious character, might cause many a professed Christian to blush, for his irreverent stupidity, in supposing that God has stepped forward, in any instance, unnecessarily to dictate what might very well have been dispensed with, or when man in the exercise of his own wisdom could have supplied the desideratum. The man, whose correct judgment would prohibit the introduction of the Deity upon the stage, when

his interposition was not absolutely necessary, would at once conclude, when sufficient evidence is produced of the presence of God, that a crisis had approached when his presence was wanted ; that some work was to be executed beyond the resources of human agency.

Creative power belongs to God alone. Let us inquire under what circumstances it has been exerted. In six days God created the heavens and the earth, commanded the light to shine, arranged the materials which compose the sublunary world, spake into existence the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree bearing fruit, beasts of every name, fish of every species, and birds of every wing. In the production of man, male and female, his glorious works were completed. When these things were brought into existence, there had been no provision made for their production, independently of an immediate exertion of divine power. It is otherwise now, and has been otherwise since God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. The machinery of creation has been put in motion in all its departments ; and according to general laws, there is ample provision made for the perpetuity by reproduction of every thing to which God gave existence at the beginning, without an immediate manifestation of power. Has God, since the creation of man, at any time displayed his creative power by an immediate act? has he restored any lost herb, or multiplied, by his efficacious word, any valuable species of fruit tree, pro-

ducing new stocks where none grew before, or where seeds had not been shed? has he given to man any new species of inferior animal, in addition to those formed at first? Nothing of the kind. It was not—it is not necessary. His power and his wisdom are amply displayed in the things existing, and in their perpetuation, each of its own species, from internal resources bestowed in creation, combined with the operation of external influences. As if he would teach us how alien from his consistent character is an immediate exertion of power, or display of wisdom in any case, in which through ordinary means the prevention is possible, he seems (to speak of our God after the manner of men) carefully to anticipate and to prevent the recurrence of the necessity of immediate operation. Witness his providence, when about to send a deluge of water upon the earth, to punish man for abounding wickedness. He directs Noah to construct an ark for the salvation of his house, at the same time, sufficiently capacious to contain the seed of every creature liable to destruction by the flood, and brings of every beast and of every fowl at least one pair, in due season, into that one place of safety. And when the seed of all terrestrial things destructible by water had been collected into the ark, God, that every thing as if under his own seal might be perfectly safe, shut the architect in, with his house, with the inferior animal, beast and fowl.

Observe again how the same rule—an immediate

exertion of divine power when divine power immediately exerted is necessary, and only then—is observed by the Son of God, when he sojourned, in the form of a servant, among men. Two examples are sufficient of the rigid adherence to the rule. A father brought his son to him, who from a child had been under the power of a deaf and dumb spirit, that the Saviour might set him free. The spirit at the command of the Son of God “came out of him;” but left him lying along like one dead, so that some of the spectators thought he was dead. Did Jesus command him to rise? No: created agency can do the rest. He put forth his hand and lifted him up. A case even more perspicuous is furnished in the history of Lazarus’s resurrection from the dead. The dead man had been in the grave now four days. “It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.” There are three things to be done—First, The stone is to be taken away from the mouth of the cave; second, Lazarus is to be reanimated; and third, His bandages are to be loosed. The Lord might have spoken the word. The stone would have rolled aside, and the man, even now dead, would have come forth free. But the power of God may not be immediately exerted, when created power is equal to the work to be executed. Man can roll away the stone. Man can loose the grave clothes in which a corpse is wrapped. God alone can reanimate the lifeless clay. Therefore, the Saviour reserves that part of the work alone for himself in which human intervention

would be vain. "Take ye away the stone," says he to them that stand by; "Lazarus, come forth," is the word of power which the dead hears. "Loose him, and let him go," he again addresses the spectators, when divine power immediately put forth is no longer wanted.

Has God deviated from the same law of operation, in giving a special revelation of himself to man? Have holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, put upon record any thing which we would have known without an inspired revelation? Has God communicated what man might have discovered by patient and impartial investigation? God has furnished us with many signal predictions of future events, some of which have been remarkably fulfilled; of others we confidently await the accomplishment. Can man penetrate "the veil that conceals from our eyes the events of future years?" Can he see what lies behind it, except God be pleased to draw it aside, and allow him a partial glance? God has revealed the appointment of a Saviour. Could man have certainly discovered that such an appointment had been made? God has set forth the personal and official character of the Saviour, the principles of the New Covenant, and the method by which the designs of God in making that covenant should be carried into effect. Could man, who was unable to ascertain the existence of a New Covenant and the appointment of a Mediator, have made any approach to the detection of its provi-

sions or of his qualifications and work? God has supplied us with a historical narrative of events occurring in successive generations, from the creation of the world till the carrying away to Babylon—from the incarnation of his Son till the imprisonment of Paul in Rome, events preparatory to the appearance of Christ, subservient to the accomplishment of the plan of redemption, and illustrative of the principles of his providential administration, the stability of his purpose, and the irresistibility of his power. These events transpired before the face of man. But would he have ever discovered their relation to the incarnation of Christ and the salvation of sinners, without a revelation from Heaven? As there can be but one answer given to the preceding questions, with others which might be formed upon all the parts of revelation, that answer is left with the reader. Moreover, these events which are more intimately connected, with the developement of the purposes of God, and the principles of his administration in regard to man, and which God has caused to be written for our learning, are of a character so little imposing that they attracted very limited attention in passing, and were likely to sink into oblivion with the men who witnessed them: nay, but for the providence of God would have been entirely overlooked and forgotten. Has any pen but that of inspiration recorded the events which are primarily set forth in the word of God? Not one. Had God not put it upon record, the history of the formation of

all things—of the deluge, of Abraham, the patriarchs, the Israelites, borne down upon the wheel of time—must have remained entirely concealed from the view of future ages, till it had performed its entire revolution. In an age affording every facility for the registry of passing occurrences, the allusions in profane writers to the appearance, the character, and the acts of Jesus of Nazareth, are so few and imperfect, that we are left to conjecture every thing without knowing any thing.

Finally: The Son of God only interferes in behalf of man when every other refuge fails. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending forth his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

One principle then seems beyond controversy—that God in no case interferes by immediate operation, except when the agency of the creature is utterly insufficient; and, of course, that his immediate interposition proves the insufficiency of man. His dictation by his spirit of a collection of songs to be used in his public service, consequently proves that man, not inspired, was not at all qualified to supply this desideratum in the church. The argument may be stated thus: God never immediately appears when the agency of the creature is adequate. But God has given to his church, by the immediate influence of his spirit, the Book of Psalms, to be used in the celebration of his praise. Therefore, man, not immediately directed by the

spirit, was inadequate to the composition of such a book for such a purpose.

Psalms suited to the exigencies of the church of God must be adapted to the diversified circumstances of all ages and of all nations—to the almost endlessly modified states of individuals. They should be divested of every thing national, occasional and temporary, partaking of the character of the whole word of God, which is equally adapted to the spiritual wants of every nation, of every generation, and of every stage of the divine life. The church of God is one. Believers, to whatever nation they belong, in whatever age they have lived or may live, are members of one body, partakers of one spirit, servants of one Lord, the subjects of one faith, engaged in one warfare, and the heirs of one inheritance. The songs, therefore, which are adapted to one nation or one age, and which cannot be introduced into a strange land, or may become antiquated, are plainly not adapted to the church of God, which is of no nation, and yet of every nation, of no age, and yet of every age. (1) Reason, then, teaches the necessity of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to the composition of songs, in which all the requisites of a psalmody for the church meet. No man, however enlarged the sphere of his religious knowledge, however diversified his religious experience, may hope to comprehend the different aspects which vice assumes, the different states of every believer's soul,

(1) Note G.

the various vicissitudes of the Christian warfare, and the multiplied sources of the Christian's strength, perseverance and joy. Let experience bear witness. There is no end to the alterations and improvements of uninspired songs, which a change of circumstances renders imperative. There is still found something defective, something suspicious if not objectionable, something at one time appropriate now obsolete, which should be perfected, improved or expunged. That short of a collection of songs by Him, whose works partake of the perfection of his own character, who knows the end from the beginning, who knows what is in man by nature, what by grace, from whom no one of man's trials, fears, hopes, joys, triumphs and prospects are hid, there is no end to the composition of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; that ever and anon a new collection or a new arrangement of an old collection claims our attention, which promises to avoid the errors and to remedy the defects of its predecessors; that yet there is not found, after all that has been promised and done, one work which shall shut the mouths of gainsayers, which shall present no sufficient handle upon which an objector shall lay hold, and which may reasonably be expected to maintain its place; that every collection will be found to bear the stamp of that baneful offspring of carnality—PARTY, and having a tendency to perpetuate that blotch upon the fair face of Christendom, at once argue the work of writing hymns for the use of the church in her

religious services too great for human wisdom, and the necessity of divine interposition to supply what man has vainly hoped to furnish. (1)

The necessity of an inspired collection of psalms may be farther argued from the peculiarly dangerous tendency of error, in the songs of the church. Poetry and song have ever been the most successful formers of the public mind. They are much better suited to give particular tone to public sentiment, than all arguments. Like a well formed and smiling countenance, which prepossesses us so suddenly and so forcibly in favor of the person, that we pity and forgive known vices, and are willing to believe that he possesses rare and decided virtues, of the existence of which we have not, nor wait to obtain substantial evidence, poetry and music lay immediate and close siege to our feelings, which, if they do not surrender at first assault, usually give an easy victory; and the understanding is taken by surprise without having been warned, or having had time to prepare against the inundation, perhaps of error, perhaps of vice, which the assailants introduce in their train. It too often happens, through a prejudice in favor of the garb in which they are clothed, that truth is received without examination, error without question, virtue without approbation, and vice without an opposing struggle. The fact appears to have been well understood in ancient and modern times, that poetry, especially when set

(1) Note H.

to music, is the most happy and expeditious road by which to approach and gain the public mind, and direct its bent at pleasure; and without particular inquiry into the cause of its power, has often been triumphantly improved. It was no wild and groundless notion, but an idea derived from an intimate acquaintance with human nature and accurate observation that led one to say, "Let me be exclusive ballad-maker for a nation, and I care not who are its legislators." And doubtless with that advantage he could easily defeat the wisest measures, excite opposition to the most salutary laws, and promote insurrection against the most upright rulers.

With what solicitude should we, therefore, guard against the introduction of songs into the service of the church, in which there may possibly be an error contrary to the doctrines of the gospel of Christ. Every error which has found its way into the hymns or psalms used by the worshippers of God, has obtained a passport to the understanding and the heart, which no ministry, however pure, can destroy. The gospel minister who gives his countenance to a psalm or song embracing error, puts into the hands of the enemy a tried weapon with which to fight against the gospel which he preaches. Let us, therefore, with one heart resolve, and with one voice proclaim our determination, to have no other songs than those which sustain the character of the songs of the Lord, in which, being the very word of God, we are sure there can be no error.

CHAPTER IV.

Has a second collection of Songs for the use of the Church been given by Inspiration?

FROM what has been advanced in the preceding chapters, it appears that to the introduction of the Book of Psalms into the church, to be used in the celebration of praise, no objection can be brought forward from their matter, which does not amount to a denial of their inspiration; that their structure and the use to which they were applied, with divine approbation, in the Israelitish Church, prove that they were given for the special purpose of praise, and infer the necessity of an inspired collection of Songs. A THIRD FACT now claims our attention.

No subsequent book or books have been written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of the same form and for the same use.

Of all the facts from which we argue for the standing use in the church, of the Book of Psalms, this is certainly the most obvious, needs the least proof, needs only to be stated to be admitted by all who are able to distinguish between the word of God and an exposition of that word: and yet

it is probably the one to which many professors would be ready most ardently to put in their negative; and in the examination of which, we shall be led necessarily into a more protracted discussion.

Only one collection of inspired songs was put into the hands of the Israelites, and they constitute an integral part of the Old Testament. The New Testament, which we have the happiness to possess, is understood to be complete. Its parts are various—historical, doctrinal and argumentative, practical, or perceptive and prophetical; but it contains no collection of songs, no one portion written in a metrical form, or presenting a shadow of internal evidence that the Holy Spirit, in dictating it, designed that it should constitute the matter of the church's praise. If Christ, or his Apostles by the Spirit, pronounced or wrote Psalms or Hymns or Spiritual Songs, God, in his providence, has been less careful of them than of other inspired compositions. The ancient collection has come down entire; but one fragment of such poetical compositions has not been preserved to tell that they once had an existence. Granting that the Apostles wrote Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, it does not follow that they were dictated by the Spirit, and intended to constitute a rule of faith and practice, or any part of such rule. Even those whom God honored to be his penmen, may have written without the immediate direction of the Spirit the result of their own studies and

investigations ; and it is an evidence of that care with which God has watched over the purity of his own word, that no part of such writings has survived. A very natural prejudice in favor of an inspired writer of a portion of revelation might have seduced man into an undue attachment to every thing proceeding from his pen, counteracted perhaps the progress of sound knowledge, and promoted the cause of error. It is well known to every one who is an attentive observer of the influence of association upon the determination of the human mind, that error is never so insinuating and successful as when combined with the principles of eternal truth ; that the error, which is supported by the friend whom we love, is viewed with less disgust, or received without inquiry ; and that the heart is predisposed to give to that man, whose clear, consistent and correct views upon one subject, have contributed to the stock of our knowledge, and expedited our progress in the investigation and acquisition of truth, credit for equal perspicacity and correctness in every department of study. We begin by attaching him to us, in the character of a useful ally, and are, if not maintaining a rigorous watch over the movements of our minds, insensibly led to sit down at his feet, and put ourselves in the situation of scholars. The influence of a name associated with inspiration must be inconceivably greater than that of either the personal friend, or the man of approved judgment. We can reason now very calmly upon the

possibility of Isaiah or Jeremiah having written upon subjects foreign to those of revelation, or only incidentally bearing upon them, and having produced nothing worthy of more attention than the pages of Newton or of Pollok ; but did their uninspired writings exist, it is probable the case would be so far altered, that we should find the disjunction of what is and is not inspired, the union of profound submission to the words of the spirit by them, and an impartial examination of their own words, requiring an effort beyond the power of man. But God has not furnished an occasion for so severe a trial of man's strength. He has considered, in condescension, our frame ; he has pitied our weakness, and put an absolute termination to anything which the inspired writers may have published, when not moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Old Testament contains references to sundry books which are not now extant in a separate form—the Books of the wars of the Lord, of Jasher, of Nathan, of Shemaiah the prophet, of Jehu the son of Hanani. Solomon also wrote many songs, and a work, as it would seem, upon natural history. We read that “his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.” We know, then, that such books existed ; but the allusion to them in the sacred volume no more proves them to have been written

by inspiration, than the allusion, in the Book of Esther, to "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia," proves that it was written by the Holy Ghost. And even if we suppose a part of them to have been the work of inspiration, there are two circumstances which show that it was not designed for standing use in the church—that it did not constitute a portion of the Scriptures which were written for our learning:—First, They are lost in the most absolute sense of the word; and Second, upon the part of our Lord and his Apostles there is no appeal to one of them. The Old Testament is quoted as unquestionable authority, and there is not a single insinuation that it is in any part defective. Nay, it is pronounced complete—"able to make wise unto salvation; profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works."

If we had the most conclusive evidence that the Evangelists and Apostles wrote a thousand and five songs, it still remains to be proved that they were written by inspiration; if we had the most conclusive evidence that they were written by inspiration, it still remains to be proved that they were adapted to general and permanent use among Christians; if it were proved that they were adapted, they have no longer an existence, and the spirit of Christ alone, by an immediate communication, can supply their place.

There is, however, no evidence that Christ or his Apostles committed anything to writing which has been lost—wrote any songs for the use of the church additional to the Jewish collection, or designed to supersede its use in the worship of God. Christ makes no reference to such poetical compositions. “The hymn which our Saviour sung with his disciples at the conclusion of the last supper, is generally supposed to have consisted of the Psalms that are contained between the one hundred and thirteenth and the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive. This was called by the Jews the great *Hallel* or *Hymn*, and was usually sung by them at the celebration of the Passover.” (1) The Apostles nowhere allude to any other than the Old Testament collection of songs. “Is any merry?” says James, “Let him sing psalms.” It is to be hoped that before any expositor shall presume to say that James refers to other psalms than those of David, he will take the trouble of proving that at that time, other psalms existed. The exhortation is certainly both intelligible and appropriate, supposing those to whom he wrote knew of no other than the Psalms of David. Many a glad heart has opened the book and sung them, and found its gladness promoted by the exercise.

An appeal to the words of Paul in support either of the existence and use of hymns, and spiritual songs, distinct from the Psalms of David, or of the propriety of introducing them into the sanctuary

(1) Gray's Key, 219.

would not be deserving of a reply, were it not calculated to make an impression upon the mind which has never been exercised in the examination of the subject, and is warped by the prevailing practice of various worshipping societies, in connection with current phraseology. Those who use uninspired songs must defend them. The songs of Zion are usually called *Psalms*; uninspired songs, *Hymns*. To the inconsiderate, (and among these may be reckoned some of the learned,) this supplies abundant evidence that the Ephesians and Colossians used uninspired poetry, in connection with the Psalms of David. Even a D. D. can ask, "Can it be doubted that the Christians of Ephesus used hymns and spiritual songs?" But let us look at the Apostle's words: "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (1) "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (2) The terms employed to designate the matter of praise are in the original as in the translation, in both epistles, the same. Why may not all these terms apply to the songs of Zion? The words of the Apostle by no means imply the existence, when he wrote, in the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, of hymns and spiritual songs not comprehended in the Book of Psalms. To the whole collection the title "Psalms" is appropriated by

(1) Col. iii. 16.

(2) Eph. v. 19.

Christ and his Apostles. The Hebrew word, *Tehillim*, by which also it is distinguished, is more correctly translated "*Hymns*." And from the character of the book, every one must at once perceive with what propriety it may be entitled "Spiritual Songs." Brown, in his dictionary, under the word psalm, thus writes: "When Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs are mentioned together, psalms may denote such as were sung on instruments; hymns, such as contain only matter of praise; and spiritual songs, such as contain doctrines, history, and prophecy for men's instruction." The distinction is deduced from the original names applied to different divine poems, and is sanctioned by the general voice of expositors. There is no reason, however, constraining us to adopt the opinion that there are, in the inspired collection, pieces to which one or other of these denominations must be exclusively applied. The particular view of the character of one of the songs of the Lord which we take, may lead us to apply to it one denomination in preference to another. If we would mark that particular feature of its character present to our mind, it may be necessary to make choice of one rather than another of the three designations used with reference to inspired poetical compositions; but I apprehend there is no one part of the collection to which the title *psalms* so exclusively belongs that it may not be called *hymns* or *spiritual songs*; no part to which the title *hymns* belongs so exclusively that it may not

be called *psalms* or *spiritual songs*; no part to which the title *spiritual songs* belongs so exclusively that it may not be called *psalms* or *hymns*. The songs of Zion will be called by all these names mentioned by the Apostle, according to the light in which they are viewed. They are all Psalms, as having been occasionally sung accompanied by instrumental music. They are all Hymns, because composed in honor of the Supreme Being. They are all Spiritual Songs, because poetical and composed by the direction of the Spirit. According, then, as the mode in which they were occasionally sung, their matter, or their structure and divine origin, are taken into consideration, the poetical pieces found collected in the Old Testament will be called psalms, or hymns, or spiritual songs.

There is nothing more common among men, there is nothing more common in Scripture, than to call the same thing by different names, according to the view which is taken of its character and use. The Old and New Testaments are called also the Word of God, the Scriptures, and the lively oracles of God. The ministers of Christ are also called Ambassadors, Bishops, Stewards, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, Shepherds. The writer of the 119th Psalm calls the Scriptures, to which he had access, the Law of the Lord, his testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word. Because we more frequently apply the term *Scripture* to denote the revelation which God has made to man, who would from that conclude that the *word*

of God, and the lively oracles of God, are books distinct from the *Scripture*? Because we almost exclusively apply the term *ministers* to point out those who are set apart to declare the counsel of God, and to administer the ordinances of God's house, who would conclude that *ambassadors* of Christ, *bishops*, *elders*, *pastors*, &c., are orders of men distinct from the *ministers* of reconciliation and from one another? Because the Saviour has adopted the style of the Jew, and used the term *law* to denote the Pentateuch, who would conclude that the *testimonies* of God, his *precepts*, *judgments*, *word*, are works totally distinct from the Books of Moses? There is just one class of men capable of drawing such a conclusion—those who can infer from the phraseology which Paul employs in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, that Hymns and Spiritual Songs must be different from the Psalms of David.

If to the preceding reasoning it should be objected that, though different names are appropriated in Scripture to the same object, we do not find an enumeration of those names, at the same time and in the same connection, in order to exhibit it in different points of view, the answer is plain—the objection is not founded in fact. We do find in the word of God a variety of terms employed to point out the same thing in its various aspects, in the same manner that the Apostle applies the terms *Psalms*, *Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs*, to denote one collection of inspired odes

under different views. When David says (1): "Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy *commandments*, thy *testimonies*, and thy *statutes*," how shall we explain the commandments of the Lord, that the matter of them and the form of them, may appear distinct from the matter and form, of the testimonies and statutes? Is there a man who will take up the Pentateuch, the Books of Joshua, of Judges, and of Samuel, and show us what are the testimonies of God as they are distinguished from the commandments? and the statutes as they are distinguished from both? Is there a man who can show that either with respect to their matter or their form, they are not identical? "Let a man so account of us," says Paul, (2) "as of the *ministers* of Christ and *stewards* of the mysteries of God." Were the Apostles divided into two classes? Was one class called *ministers*? the other *stewards*? or have we not here two views of the same character? "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, *supplications*, *prayers*, *intercessions*, and giving of thanks be made for all men." (3) Here there is obviously a multiplication of terms to exhibit different views of the same exercise. I should like to be informed how a man may pray without making supplication and intercession: how intercede, without making prayer and supplication. Till I have been taught this curious lesson, I must be excused for thinking that Christians may fulfil the apostolic injunction, "and sing with grace,

(1) 1 Chron. xxix, 19.

(2) 1 Cor. iv. 1.

(3) 1 Tim. ii. 1.

in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs," who always use the Psalms of David.

Perhaps some may think that an easier explanation of the Apostle's phraseology is found in the titles prefixed to the greater part of the Psalms in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, from which he quotes frequently, even when the reading differs from the received Hebrew text, and which would naturally be put into the hands of the primitive Christians, speaking the Greek language. If so, I do not object. The reason why an immediate reference was not made to those titles is, that they are considered by many of doubtful authority, and to some of the psalms no titles are prefixed. It is true, however, that the titles given to the psalms answer to the terms employed by Paul, to designate the poetical compositions which he requires the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, to use in the celebration of praise. We find one entitled *Psalmos* (Psalm), another *Ode* (Song), and another *Halleluiah*. The last title is made up of two Hebrew words, which signify "Praise ye the Lord," and identifies the poem to which it is prefixed with that of which the Greek term *Hymnos* (Hymn) is the proper specific title. Of the titled psalms the greater number have the first of the three titles mentioned, twenty-seven have the second, and eighteen the third. Granting, then, that the appropriate Greek title of the eighteen psalms of praise is *Hymnoi* (Hymns), Paul, by directing the churches

to use psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, points out to them the Book of Psalms, according to the titles prefixed to most of them in the version which was best known of course, to all who spake the Greek language. (1)

From what has been said, it must appear pretty evident that, whilst the New Testament supplies us with no songs for the use of the church, Christ and his Apostles are silent as to any known to them, and used under their direction, not included in the Psalms of David.

(1) Note K.

CHAPTER V.

Modern Hymns and Songs.

It is with extreme embarrassment that I approach the consideration of the claims of modern poetical compositions, written for the use of the church and introduced into her services. In impugning their inspiration, we are contending against an adversary who has a substantive existence, and yet his existence is denied. The whole difficulty involved in the discussion, is traceable to a confusion of ideas that attaches to those who write, as well as to those who use hymns or songs written, for the public or social services of the professed followers of Christ, without *professing* to claim for such compositions a place among inspired writings.

Some of our religious Poets, and those whose works are most extensively used, claim little, if anything less, than inspiration for themselves. The expressions occasionally used would, as we shall have occasion to notice, warrant the conclusion that they considered themselves entitled to stand upon a more elevated position than some of the inspired writers. As this may be judged too severe a charge to bring against our admired Poets,

let an appeal to their own language decide the question of their just claims, or unwarrantable assumption.

Dr. Watts says, in his preface to his hymns and spiritual songs: "There are also in the Book of Psalms many deficiencies of light and glory, which our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles have supplied in the writings of the New Testament, and with this advantage I have composed these spiritual songs which are now presented to the world. Nor is the attempt vainglorious or presuming; for in respect of clear evangelical knowledge, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than all the Jewish prophets." Here there is plainly a confounding of that illumination which begins in the new birth with inspiration. If the latter part of the statement mean anything in relation to the composition of spiritual songs, it means that himself, though the least in the kingdom of God, being greater than all the Jewish prophets, and, of course, than David, is better qualified than he was to compose songs for standing use in the church, and implies either that the Psalmist, though the spirit spake by him, might err, or himself was raised above the possibility of error. The Apostles only desired to have their writings on the same ground with the prophets—teaching us that the church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets; but his compositions must occupy a higher place than the prophets.

The superiority which the gentle Watts assumes

in the presence of the sweet Psalmist is thus animadverted on by Reid, in his "Observations and Remarks on Dr. Watts' Preface to his Book of Psalms and Hymns:"—"It may be proper to notice the insulting manner in which the Doctor treats David, in his imitation of the 119th Psalm, and in the note which he sets before it. He says: 'I have collected and disposed the most useful verses of this psalm under eighteen different heads, and formed a divine song upon each of them. But the verses are much transposed to attain some degree of connection.' This psalm, as it stands in the original Hebrew, is one of the most artful and elegant, and perhaps one of the most labored, compositions that ever appeared in any language. It is divided into twenty-two parts, and each part contains eight stanzas or verses, which begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It was probably composed when the Psalmist was far advanced in years, and matured in divine knowledge and wisdom, for it contains lessons of practical religion which have not only never been equalled by the pen of man, but are, in fact, the sum and substance of all true religion, as it exists in the heart and experience of the aged Christian. The man who has spent a long life in the study of the Scriptures and the practice of Christianity, will here find, day by day, new lessons of spiritual wisdom to regulate his heart and affections. Men possessed of the most exalted talents—men the most highly endowed with every Christian virtue—

have not been ashamed to read, and study and meditate upon this psalm to the end of their lives, and confess that they always found something in it new and delightful. But Doctor W. treats it as a piece of crude composition, deficient in connection and precision, and as if some of it were useless or unintelligible to the Christian church, and, therefore, not fit to be sung in the praises of God. In order 'to attain some degree of connection,' he has mangled, and torn, and dislocated, almost every joint of this divine composition. We talk of a language being murdered, when the writer or speaker uses the words of it in a manner which is highly improper. But Doctor W. has committed murder in a much more criminal sense, for he has torn this psalm limb from limb, and put it together in such a bungling manner that not only its beauty and elegance, but the very sense of it, is in a great measure lost. He has the vanity and presumption to say, that 'he has collected and disposed the most useful verses of it under eighteen different heads, and formed a divine song upon each of them.' Some of the verses he considered as useless, and threw them aside; and the rest he altered and arranged according to his own fancy, and this he calls '*forming a divine song upon each of them.*' " (1)

Wesley says, in his preface to the Hymns for Methodists: "It is large enough to contain all the important truths of our holy religion, whether

speculative or practical : yea, to illustrate them all and to prove them all, both by Scripture and reason. *And this is done* in regular order." Again he adds : " May I be permitted to add a few words with respect to the poetry ? Then I will speak to them who are judges thereof with all freedom and unreserve. To these I may say without offence : First, In those hymns there is no doggerel, no botches—nothing put in to patch up the rhyme—no feeble expletives ; second, Here is nothing turgid or bombast on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other ; third, There are no cant expressions—no words without meaning ; those who impute this to us know not what they say : we talk common sense both in prose and verse, and use no words but in a fixed and determinate meaning ; fourth, Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language." Again, speaking of some who had reprinted some of the hymns : " I desire they would not attempt to mend them, for they are really not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse." Nothing more can be claimed for the writings of the Holy Ghost. There is neither error nor defect in the matter, and there is no defect in the form. The author of some of the hymns, and the selector of the rest, has pronounced the book perfect, admitting of no improvement—*more perfect than the Bible*. Be patient, reader. I have not made a statement without thought. If I have thought incorrectly,

point out the error. This collection contains only the important, but "all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical." Where are the unimportant truths of our holy religion to be found? Doctrines not taught in Scripture are not doctrines of our holy religion at all, but unholy traditions of vain man. The unimportant truths of *our holy religion* must be in the Bible. If the character which the compiler has given of his "Hymns" be just, in possession of it we would have no cause to regret the loss of the Scriptures. It would form an excellent and adequate substitute, while the minds of the weak would be freed from the difficult exercise of separating between the important and the unimportant truths, and furnished with the proofs which reason supplies of the doctrines of religion, and which are wanting to him who has nothing but the word of God. Let it pass. There is neither error, nor defect nor redundancy in the hymns of John Wesley!

The original and grand source of the error in holding modern poetical compositions to be inspired, is that to which we have already referred, and which is brought to view in the words quoted from the preface of Dr. Watts: The confounding of the very wide distinction between inspiration and regeneration, or its fruit, spiritual illumination. To set aside the claims of modern poets to inspiration, it is only necessary to bring them to the test of the principles enumerated in the first Chapter. From that Chapter, it appears that every inspired

writing, having God for its *author*, is free from *error*, *defect* or *redundancy*, and *authoritative* in the determination of *all questions contemplated by it*, and in demanding the unqualified reception of its doctrines, and absolute submission to its rules, of those to whom it is given.

The characteristics of inspiration, which have been enumerated, being admitted, and the Scripture points them out to us, there can be no longer a difficulty in excluding the claims of any, the most distinguished theological writers, whether of prose or of verse, who have lived subsequent to the Apostles, to inspiration. In whatever estimation the names of Calvin, of Beza, of Owen, of Newton, of Watts, and of Dwight, with a host of others, are held—with whatever pleasure their works are read—however profitable their writings may have proved in the elucidation and defence of truth, and in the edification of the church, they have no intrinsic excellence in them. Their names, as divines, are honored, because associated with sincere piety; and their works, in a theological point of view, derive their value from being founded on the word of God. We can only receive them upon comparison with the word of God, and a discovery of the identity of the doctrines which they teach with the doctrines of Scripture. The very examination and trial of their writings by the lively oracles of God, implies the conviction that possibly there may be found in them deviations from the inspired standard. Is

there one who does not perceive that the moment he admits the inspiration of their works, or the works of any one of them, he renounces all right to examine them, and to compare them with the Scriptures, to ascertain their correctness? He is forthwith bound to receive every statement without question, without reply. They become a standard of truth and duty. We do not consider ourselves at liberty to inquire whether anything contained in the word of God be true—be pure. Whatever is found there is considered true and pure, of course. Why? *Because it is the word of God—the word of inspiration.* Now all portions of inspired writing have equal authority. To question the correctness of any proposition of an inspired book, is to question the truth of God. Is there one in the Christian church who would take up the writings, or any part of the writings, of Newton, for instance, of Watts, or of Wesley, and say, “Here is a book in which there is not one error, or dubious expression; in which there is not wanting one statement necessary to render it perfect, and perfectly adapted to its end; in which there will not be found one superfluous proposition or illustration, one mere conjecture, one sentence which could be spared, without marring the beauty, the arrangement, the perspicuity, the fulness; by which I am bound; the truth of which I dare not question, apart from all external evidence; which is the rule of my faith and practice; and to which I appeal, freely and finally, in all controversies of

a religious nature; from which the individual who dissents is guilty of rejecting the truth and denying the authority of God?" I confidently hope there is not one. I am persuaded there is not one. And if not, then there is not one who does not deny the inspiration of Newton, of Watts, or of Wesley. Although the use of the poetical writings of Newton, of Watts, or of Wesley, and the vindication of the propriety of introducing them into the house of God as the matter of praise, does not imply the assertion of their inspiration, yet it has led to a prevailing indistinctness of apprehension upon the subject of inspiration in general, and involves those who use, and vindicate the use of uninspired compositions, in a fearful responsibility.

The third fact is, I consider, proved, that no book or books, subsequent to the Psalms of David, have been given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to constitute the matter of the churches praise; and it has been proved that an inspired collection of songs was necessary, from the fact that one was given by inspiration. But if the existence of a collection of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, given by inspiration, infer that it was necessary one should be given to the church, the conclusion which follows from the third fact is, that no second inspired collection was needed in the church—is needed by us under this dispensation.

A second collection of songs, dictated by the Spirit, must be unnecessary for one of three reasons:—Either believers are not required to praise

God in a song under the New Testament dispensation, or the superior advantages of later times enable Christians, or Christian ministers, to write, without the special aid of inspiration, with an accuracy, a propriety and a precision, which the Old Prophet required the aid of inspiration to exhibit; or the Psalms of David are not divested of their adaptation to the exigencies of a worshipping people by their age, and do not require to be superseded by any others.

1st. Shall we suppose that believers are not required to praise God in the use of songs under the New Testament dispensation? Is this the reason that God has not supplied us with psalms and songs, specially designed for the members of Christ in the last days of the world? It has been shown in the introduction, from the example of Christ and his Apostles, and from inspired precept, that the church is still required to sing praise—that it constitutes a permanent part of instituted worship. Perhaps

2d. The superior light shed upon the church enables Christians or ministers of reconciliation to write, without the special aid of inspiration, with an accuracy, a propriety, and a precision, which they required the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost to exhibit, who lived previous to the incarnation of the Son of God. From the manner in which Dr. Watts has introduced the words of our Lord concerning John the Baptist, he would seem to have thought they implied as much. “Verily

I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (1) There is evidently no reference here to a capability of writing upon divine subjects, or on any subject, with propriety and accuracy. The writings of every inspired penman lay claim to infallible accuracy—to unerring propriety. In these respects, therefore, one inspired writer cannot be greater than another, and much less an uninspired writer, greater than one inspired. John, *as a teacher of divine things*, could not possibly be greater than the Prophet Isaiah, nor the *greatest* in the kingdom of God, greater than John.

There is nothing more common, or less liable to misconstruction, than the application of the term *greater*, when not an inherent, but a relative, not a personal, but an official, superiority is intended. "Only in the throne will I be *greater* than thou," says Pharaoh to Joseph, when, it can scarcely be doubted, he considered his servant, in point of intellectual strength and wisdom, his superior. "This man, Mordecai, waxed *greater* and *greater*," we read, when there is simply a reference to the office he filled and the extent of his reputation. "Whether is *greater*, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth?" It is readily answered: He that sitteth at meat; yet, in regard to talent, education; intelligence, the servant may be vastly superior to

(1) Math. xi. 11.

his master. Because, according to the terms of the covenant of redemption, the Saviour was the servant of the Father, he says, "My Father is *greater* than I," though the names given to him, the attributes and works ascribed to him, prove him to be the father's *equal*—his *fellow*, as he is styled in Zechariah.

John is introduced to notice, not in his personal, but his prophetic character, in connection with the special province assigned to him among them who had been or should be appointed to reveal Christ Jesus the Lord. See the parallel passage in Luke (1): "Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater *prophet* than John the Baptist: but he that is (the) least (prophet) in the kingdom of God is greater than he." How is John *more* than a prophet? In the *nearer place* he occupied to the Lord. He was not more holy, more faithful, more inspired, or more accurate in declaring the word of God. But whereas they were sent before to announce that a deliverer should rise out of Judah, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, John occupies the distinguished place of his Forerunner, to prepare the way for him, proclaim his immediate approach, and point him out. This is the reason our Lord assigns for describing him, as *more than a prophet*. "What went ye out for to see? A prophet: yea, I say unto you, and *more than a prophet*. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger

before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." How is the least prophet in the kingdom of Heaven greater than John? He occupies a still more honorable place than John did. He is a companion and a friend, and has discoveries made to him which were hidden from all the greatest that had gone before him, or were only obscurely unfolded to them. "And he turned unto his disciples, and said privately: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (1)

Or is it urged that superiority is ascribed not merely to the least prophet, but to the least saint in the kingdom of God? Be it granted. He has a relative superiority. His lot is ordered in a time of greater light and greater glory—glory eclipsing all the splendor of a former dispensation. "If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (2) The shadows have fled away. The mysteries, which were seen dimly through types and figures, are discovered before the New Testament Saint, in their proper character and substance. He has clearly set before him the mystery of Christ, in relation to the application to all nations

(1) Luke x. 24.

(2) 2 Cor. iii. 9, 10.

of the benefits of redemption, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit," and through them "to the saints." He is presented with a view in a historical form of the accomplishment of that plan of salvation, which the prophets did not fully comprehend, who foretold the coming of Christ, by whom the plan was carried into effect, and the sufferings by which he was perfected. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, and what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." He occupies a place in which he has greater advantages for the investigation of prophecy, than the prophets who uttered the predictions. In one word, the canon of Scripture completed, is put into his hands.

Does it follow, because a man has greater light, more abundant means of information upon all religious subjects, has advantages greater than prophets, (inspiration out of the question,) that he is wiser? His responsibility is increased, and, alas! often his guilt. Night, twilight, and the light of a meridian sun, are alike to him whose eyes are closed. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

However abundant the means of knowledge, even with the understanding awake to their importance and the manner of using them, our knowledge acquired in the use of means is necessarily gradual, and our progress cannot be greater than the energy and diligence, with which they are employed. Men, whose knowledge is accumulated by the use of means, may be found in all stages from ignorance to perfection. The Hebrew Christians, to whom Paul writes, as we, belonged to the kingdom of God, and yet he addressed them thus: "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one *teach you* again which be the *first principles of the oracles of God*." (1) They were ignorant of the *first principles* of the oracles of God, or but imperfectly acquainted with them. But the *least* among them was greater than John—than all the Jewish prophets. It will not, however, be said that a man who needs to be taught which be the first principles of the oracles of God, is as well qualified to write Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs as David; it will not be said that he is qualified at all. The superiority, therefore, of the children of God's kingdom must consist in something which does not necessarily infer greater wisdom, or a capability of standing among prophets, much less above them, in writing for the church. They enjoyed the advantages and privileges of the New Covenant, concerning whom Paul writes thus to Timothy: "From a pure heart, and a good con-

(1) Heb. v. 12.

science, and faith unfeigned, some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling: desiring to be teachers of others: understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." (1) And are there not many still ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God within the church? And are there not who desire to be teachers who understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm?

Men may be allowed to possess a knowledge of facts, doctrines, precepts, promises, &c., of revelation, and still not be qualified to write with an accuracy ensuring the faithful communication of what they know. Men who have obtained a liberal education, it will be said, are qualified. But a liberal education constitutes no part of that superiority which is predicated of those who belong to the Kingdom of God. All Christians have not a liberal education, and many, who enjoy all its advantages, do not belong to Christ. But the least in the Kingdom of God possesses the superiority of which our Lord makes mention.

What is the practical evidence that men of talents, education, piety never questioned, have produced of being able to come into competition with prophets in writing for the benefit of the church? The spirit of truth is the spirit of consistency. The truth is always consistent with itself. The word of inspiration, therefore, never can contradict itself. No contradiction accordingly is to be found among inspired writers from Moses to

(1) 1 Tim. i. 6, 7.

John. They all "*speaking the same thing.*" How much contradiction among theological writers—among *writers of hymns*—among men whose *sacred songs* are used as the *matter* of praise! How much opposition among professors, and ministers (so called and so received) of Christ, while all profess to derive their knowledge from the same source, and that affording no ground of division, because it is one! Upon every doctrine of revelation, upon the most prominent, there has been and is diversity of views. This is a bad argument of ability to write with as much propriety and accuracy as Prophets—to supply an adequate substitute for the spiritual songs given by inspiration. With this fact before his eyes, the man who would place an uninspired individual, whatever may be his character or attainments, upon a level with an inspired one, not to say above him, as a writer, can hardly be considered of a sound mind. Among men of conflicting sentiments, in possession of the same facilities for acquiring information upon religious subjects, how shall we select the man whose accuracy is complete? We cannot. We must receive the writings of all with cautious examination; and when we find them intruding into a place, which belongs not to them, however great their inherent value, we must give them the same treatment that the priests did Uzziah, King of Judah, when he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. But, indeed, if one individual be found wandering into the mazes

of error, in the enjoyment of all the advantages common to Christians, we can no longer consider those advantages a security against error and deviation in any. (1)

If the superior advantages of the Christian dispensation do not qualify men to write with infallible accuracy—accuracy equal to that of inspiration—we must still look for another reason why an inspired collection of Songs, in addition to the one with which the church has been presented, or designed to supersede its use, is not necessary. Perhaps

3d. The Old Testament Psalms are sufficient for the church still, and adapted to her present state. This brings us forward to the examination of the FOURTH and last FACT upon which our argument rests, and the consideration of which shall form the subject of another chapter.

(1) Note L.

CHAPTER VI.

Are the Psalms of David adapted to the State of the Church under this Dispensation, as under the former?

THE reason why it was not necessary that a *second* collection of songs for the use of the church should be given by inspiration, remains to be pointed out. It is found in the FOURTH FACT, from which we argue in favor of the exclusive use of the "Songs of Zion" in the celebration of praise.

The Book of Psalms is no less adapted to our situation and times than it was to the situation of Israelites, and the times of their national existence.

This fact will be admitted by every one who is acquainted with the Book—not by those who are acquainted merely with what has been said respecting it, or respecting a metrical translation of it, with which it has been foolishly confounded, (1) but with the *book itself*; not by those who know only a few verses, detached by prejudice or impiety to produce an impression unfavorable to its introduction into, or its continuance in its proper place, but who know the *whole book*; not by those

(1) Note M.

who understand its language as it has often been interpreted by man, (and, indeed, they, if consistent, should deny that it ever became the lips of a worshipper of a God of *love*,) but who receive it as it is interpreted by him by whom it was dictated. "Numberless," says Gray, "are the testimonies that might be produced in praise of these admirable compositions, which contain, indeed, a complete epitome of the history, doctrines, and instructions of the Old Testament, delivered with every variety of style that can encourage attention, and framed with an elegance of construction superior far to the finest models in which Pagan antiquity hath inclosed its mythology. These invaluable hymns are daily repeated without weariness, though their beauties are often overlooked in familiar and habitual perusal. As hymns immediately addressed to the Deity, they reduce righteousness to practice, and while we acquire the sentiments, we perform the offices of piety." "They present religion to us," says Bishop Horne, "in its most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption." And Watts himself, with a remarkable, but most happy contradiction, proclaims the Book of Psalms "the most noble, most devotional, and divine collection of poesy:" that there "never was a piece of experimental divinity so nobly written, and so justly

reverenced and admired." Let us now inquire whether we have not good reasons for appropriating these compositions, so highly extolled, and so justly, to our own use, and whether there be any want of adaptation in them to our circumstances, on account of which we must lay them aside, and introduce the less noble, but more suitable songs of modern date.

SECTION I.

There is *no part* of Scripture which brings the *Saviour* more fully to view than the *Book of Psalms*.

The Psalms exhibit him, in his person, character, offices, and work. The assertion is not conjectural: it is not supported by any fanciful interpretation of the Psalms, not by fallible authority, but by an inspired application of inspired language. When the Apostle of the Gentiles would teach the Hebrews the superiority of Christ to all angels—that he is “God over all, blessed for ever,” the object of worship in heaven and on earth, he appeals almost exclusively to the Book of Psalms. Of seven quotations, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, from the Old Testament, six are from the Psalms of David; and some have supposed that the seventh is from the same book. To show the necessary subserviency of the incarnation of Christ to the work of redemption, he refers to the Book of Psalms, in three cases out of four. (1) To prove the paramount claim of Messiah, as a

(1) Heb. i., ii.

prophet and legislator, in comparison with Moses himself, Paul adduces the Psalms. (1) When he would show the divine origin, the dignity, the efficiency, the permanence of the priesthood of Christ, its superiority, in both sacrifice and intercession, to the Aaronic, he turns to the Psalms. (2) When he brings forward the doctrine of his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and his investiture with universal authority, he shows that the same is taught in the Book of Psalms. (3) The mission of the Apostles and their successors, and the promulgation of the Gospel among all nations, the inspired writer discovers in the Psalms. "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." These words of David are thus applied by the Apostles. ("Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, &c." (4) Again we read: "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. O

(1) Heb. iii. iv. 1—13.

(2) Heb. iv., v.

(3) Rom. xv. 25—28; Heb. ii. 8, 9.

(4) Eph. iv. 9—13.

praise the Lord, all ye nations : praise him, all ye people." These words are thus applied : " Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers : and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy : " *as it is written*, " For this cause, I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again, praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people." (1)

The history of the leading particulars of the life of Immanuel is anticipated in the Psalms. It is a small matter that many see nothing in them except the history of David's or of Asaph's life and experience, when holy Apostles saw, and have discovered to us by the Spirit, that the Lord our righteousness is a much more prominent object than the sons of Jesse and Berachiah.

The following particulars are selected from those which are taught in the Psalms of David :

1st. The rejection of Christ by the Jewish doctors. " The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes." The application of these words is made by Jesus himself, and twice by Peter. Compare Matt. xxi. 42 : Acts iv. 11 : 1 Pet. ii. 7—8, with Ps. cxviii. 22—23.

2d. The circumstances of his public entrance into Jerusalem are declared in the spirit of prophecy. " Out of the mouths of babes and suck-

(1) Rom. xv. 8, 9, 11.

lings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." The Saviour points out the application of these words. He enters Jerusalem, seated on an ass, attended by a multitude, some spreading their garments in the way, some strewing branches, all proclaiming, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest:" and he displays his authority as a Son over his own house by turning them out of the temple that had converted his Father's residence into a place of merchandise. "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what they say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" The priests and scribes are silent. *The enemy and avenger is stilled.* Compare Ps. viii. 2, with Matt. xxi. 5—16.

3d. In the Psalms the combination of all nations against the Saviour is revealed. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." And we learn the views of the disciples respecting the passage from the following words: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed,

both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. Ps. ii. 2—3, compared with Acts iv. 26—28.

4th. The partition of Christ's raiment, when he is being crucified, with the particular mode by which his seamless coat was disposed of, is set before us in the Book of Psalms. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." How literally was this verified in the man of Nazareth ! So literal was the accomplishment, that no man can doubt that Messiah speaks in the twenty-second Psalm, by the mouth of David. As the words of the Son of David, it was received by the Evangelist. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, among themselves, let us not rend it but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." (1)

5th. The Jews read and sung in the Psalms the Saviour's pathetic expression of his sense of desertion, in the hour when the powers of darkness were let loose, and his expression of confidential reliance when about to give up the Ghost. "My God,

my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Into thine hand I commit my spirit." Ps. xxii. 1 and xxxi. 5, compared with Matt. xxvii. 46, and Luke xxiii. 46.

If a full and perspicuous exhibition of the person and work, the trials and triumphs of the Captain of salvation, should recommend a collection of songs to the attention of Christians—if it argue their adaptation to the Christian church, as the matter of her praise, that recommendation belongs to the Book of Psalms in a preeminent degree. The preceding references may serve, in some measure, to remove the impression which would seem to have been made upon the minds of some, that an exhibition of the peculiarities of a typical dispensation is the most prominent feature of the Songs of Zion. The peculiarities of those Songs are the peculiarities of the everlasting covenant, and of the divine life.

The subject of the Psalms, as a display of him who is all our salvation and all our desire, has, however, only been touched. Instead of proceeding from Psalm to Psalm, for the purpose of pointing out the Redeemer, brought forth directly or indirectly in almost all, (which would be tedious, though not otherwise difficult,) we shall take the more expeditious, and perhaps more profitable plan of laying down a general rule, by which it may with great facility be discovered when Christ is either the speaker or the object contemplated in any given Psalm. This rule is one taught by the

Apostles, Peter and Paul: it is one which they united in employing in the interpretation of the language of the Psalms: it is one which, by consequence, is sanctioned by the Spirit. It is the Spirit's rule for the legitimate exposition of his own words. Simplicity is its recommendation.

The rule is this: When an expression is used in one of the Psalms, which is not true of the writer when the first person is used, nor of the apparent object contemplated by the writer, when the second or third person is used, it may safely be taken for granted that Jesus Christ, in the former case, is the speaker; in the latter, that he is addressed or spoken of.

Consider how the Apostles apply this rule, with the utmost harmony. Turn to the sixteenth Psalm. "I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more." The words which have been read, Peter repeats in his address to the mixed multitude which had congregated together, attracted by the miraculous events of the day of Pentecost, and proceeds to reason upon them in the following strain: "Men

and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn unto him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (1) When we read the Psalm, we might be ready to suppose David the speaker, declaring his own resolution, and confidence and joy. "*I have set the Lord always before me,—He is at my right hand—therefore my heart is glad.*" This Peter evidently takes for granted. But presently we meet with a declaration, upon which he fixes the attention of his audience, which cannot be explained of David or any other human person. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Here we are at a stand. David disappears. The Apostle puts his hearers in mind that David is dead and buried, that his sepulchre was still before their eyes to testify that his soul had been left in hell, and that his flesh had seen corruption. David, therefore, he concludes, is not speaking of himself. He is the organ of another, of whom every part of the song is true. Of Christ the words are true. He has been raised from the dead, without having seen corruption. The inference is Christ speaks by David.

(1) Acts ii. 29—31.

Paul adopts the same rule of interpretation. He quotes a part of the eighth Psalm: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." As the cursory reader might be ready to suppose, that the Psalmist designs merely to set forth the sovereignty and honour, conferred upon man by his Creator, in appointing him Lord of this lower world, the Apostle is willing for a moment to admit it, that he may, from the admission, take occasion to point out the fallacy of the supposition. He compares the concluding declaration with facts. "He hath put all things in subjection under his feet." If then *all* things are subjected, it follows plainly, the Creator "left nothing which is not put under him." But is this consistent with facts—facts which are open to the observation of all? Are all things, without exception, in this world, under man's feet? Do all obey him? Every one is ready to answer, "Far from it." A very small proportion of the beasts of the field, or of the fowls of the air, or of the fish of the sea, is subject to his control. Many of them are objects calculated to inspire, and inspiring terror into his heart: and then over winds, and waves, the thunder, the earthquake, and the rain, he has no power. Long as man is supposed to have reigned, his power is still confined within

very narrow limits. "But now we *see not yet* all things put under him? Of whom then does the penman speak in the eighth Psalm? Of mere man plainly he is not speaking, or the testimony is false which he brings. Paul teaches us that it is of the "man" approved of God by signs and wonders wrought by him, while he sojourned on earth,—of the "son of man," who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Of him the words of the Psalm are true, in the most absolute sense of them. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (1)

Such is the rule, and such is the authority by which it is recommended. Let it be tried upon those Psalms which the New Testament writers interpret of the Saviour. If it fail in one instance, it cannot be singly relied on. We shall bring forward but a few examples. Read the second Psalm. The question to be determined is, whether David be intended by the *King*, who is said to be set upon the Holy Hill of Zion, and Solomon the *Son* mentioned toward the conclusion of the Psalm; or whether Christ be both God's *King* and *Son*. If there be found language not true of David or Solomon, the Saviour is revealed to us. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou

(1) Heb. ii. 6—9.

shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Was this realized in David? or in Solomon? No. Consequently we look for their fulfilment in Christ, the Father's Anointed.—See the eighteenth Psalm. "The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." David's hands and feet never were pierced. Lots never were cast upon his vesture. The Psalm is the words of Christ speaking by David. In the fortieth Psalm we read: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." Were no sacrifices, according to the ceremonial law, required of David? They were, and he presented them, in obedience to the Divine injunction. But the fulfilment of the law, in its moral obligation, was required of Christ, and he magnified the law and made it honourable. Additional examples are not necessary.

When the Book of Psalms is read in the light of Evangelists and Apostles, Christ will be found set forth in it very fully. If we look for a collection of Hymns or Psalms, or Spiritual Songs bringing the Saviour more fully, than he is brought to view in the Songs of Zion, we shall look in vain. To expect another exhibiting him with unerring correctness would be even more vain, if possible.

So thought Bishop Horsely. His words, as cited by H. Horne, (1) are, "Of those (Psalms) which allude to the life of David, there are *none* in which

(1) Int. vol. 4, p. 97, 113.

the Son of David is not the principal and immediate subject. David's complaints against his enemies are Messiah's complaints, first of the unbelieving Jews, then of the Heathen persecutors and of the apostate faction in later ages. David's afflictions are Messiah's sufferings. David's penitential supplications are Messiah's, under the burden of the imputed guilt of man. David's songs of triumph and thanksgiving, are Messiah's songs of triumph and thanksgiving, for his victory over sin, and death, and hell. In a word, there is not a page of this book of Psalms, in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him. It should seem, the Spirit of Jehovah would not be wanting to enable a mere man to make complaint of *his own enemies*, to describe *his own sufferings just as he felt them*, and *his own escapes just as they happened*. But the Spirit of Jehovah described, by David's utterance, what was known to that Spirit only, and that Spirit only could describe. So that, if David be allowed to have any knowledge of the true subject of his own compositions, it was nothing in his own life, but something put into his mind by the Holy Spirit of God; and the misapplication of the Psalms to the literal David has done more mischief, than the misapplication of any other parts of the Scripture, among those who profess the belief of the Christian Religion."

SECTION II.

In the Psalms more especially, there is a most happy adaptation of the language to the state of THE CHURCH.

While the phraseology was truly appropriate in the lips of those who lived before the incarnation of the Son of God, it has lost none of its propriety in the lips of believers to whom that event is matter of history. This is a feature of the Psalms, though not exclusive, yet more prominent, which has too often been overlooked. It has very frequently been taken for granted, that the Songs, adapted to the Church in the period of youth, when her members trusted in a Saviour promised, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in predictions not verified by the event, in their worship, were regulated by the precepts of a ceremonial law, soon to be abrogated, and subjected to local and temporary restrictions, must be inappropriate among those who look to a Saviour who has already come, and "by one sacrifice forever perfected them that are sanctified," to whom prediction has put on the garb of history, before whose eyes the shadows have passed away, and who worship God in every place with equal acceptance. But have they who think that this must be obvious from the very nature of things, examined with care the mode of expression which the Spirit has employed in the Psalms? Are we required, in using them, to celebrate the personal and official glories of a Saviour, *as yet to come?* to sing predictions, already verified by their accomplishment, in terms which imply that their

fulfilment is still an object of hope? to employ language which supposes that we are still under the yoke of a burdensome ritual? and to speak as if we were under the same local restrictions, in tendering the public expressions of our homage, with the Jews? That the answer to all these questions must be given in the negative, shall, it is believed, appear from an attentive examination of the following particulars.

1. The *inefficacy* of *legal sacrifices* is taught in the Psalms. They are not merely represented as about to pass away, but as having already passed away. In the exercise of that faith which is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," the inspired writer anticipates the period to which his hopes are directed, and speaks of its liberty in the language of one who had seen the Kingdom of God come with power. God had spoken; and he exults in what God had promised, as if it were already realised; so that in some instances, the power of faith being kept out of view, the reader might be ready to suppose the language of some of the Psalms more appropriate in the mouth of a Christian than of a Jew. Take the following examples. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." (1) These are the words of Christ, according to the testimony of Paul; but that he speaks in the name of his people, as well as in his own, appears from the

(1) Ps. xl. 6.

preceding verse. "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to *us*-ward." Again, "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (1) And in the subsequent verses of the Psalm, when God calls the open contemner of his name to an account, he charges him, not with the neglect of ceremonial rites, but with a love of darkness, with theft, adultery, profanity, deceit, slander, and want of natural affection. Contrast the preceding passage with the words of Malachi, (2)—"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar: and ye say, wherein have we polluted thee? And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Will a man rob God? But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (3) If Christians were required,

(1) Ps. l. 8—15.

(2) Mal. i. 7, 8.

(3) Mal. iii. 8.

in using the Psalms, to employ such terms, plainly implying the continued obligation of ceremonies, it would be at once conceded that they are inappropriate. Once more: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering." (1) What! Was no sacrifice or offering, according to the law, required of David? Assuredly the ceremonial law was obligatory upon him, and he observed it. But he knew that legal sacrifices only served for the purifying of the flesh, and that a better sacrifice was wanted to expiate the guilt of the soul. Besides, directed by the Spirit, he adopts language which faith warrants, and the subjects of it in the last age may appropriate. One other quotation and I have done. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox, or bullock, that hath horns and hoofs." (2)

It must be admitted, and it is admitted most willingly, that allusions to ceremonial acts of worship, and also to the localities of the Israelitish residence, and of their city, and temple, abound in the book of Psalms. There are few, however, with those passages present to their minds, which teach the inefficacy of sacrifice, who would say that the adoption of phraseology borrowed from ancient rites, is adapted to convey the idea of the permanent obligation of them upon those who use it. And if Jerusalem, and Zion, and Palestine, are represented,

(1) Ps. II. 16.

(2) Ps. lxxix. 30, 31.

as the permanent seat of worship and place of rest, it may appear in the sequel, that that is no objection to the present use of the Psalms, which furnish such representations.

The Apostle points out a distinction of sacrifices into *legal* and *spiritual*. "Above when he said, sacrifice and offering, and burnt offering, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein." Thus far the Apostle, in the words of the fortieth Psalm. And he immediately adds, "*which are offered by the law.*" Sacrifices are still required, but not *legal* sacrifices. The use of the language of the Psalms implies an obligation to offer sacrifices, but not *legal* sacrifices. "Which are offered by the law." (1) The Psalms themselves furnish an explanation of sacrifices, and offerings, as obligatory upon believers of every age, founded, as you will at once perceive, upon the distinction which the Apostle holds up to view. I shall put down a few verses without comment. "Offer the sacrifices of *righteousness*, and put your trust in the Lord.—Whoso *offereth* praise glorifieth me.—The sacrifices of God are a *broken spirit*, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of *righteousness*, with burnt offering and with whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks from thine altar.—I will freely sacrifice unto thee; *I will praise thy name*, O Lord, for it is good.—I will offer to thee the sacrifice of *thanksgiving*, and will call

(1) Heb. x. 8.

upon the name of the Lord.—Let my prayer be set forth before thee as *incense*, and the lifting up of my hands, as *the evening sacrifice*.”

The use of terms borrowed from the ancient economy, is authorised by the example of New Testament writers. They describe the character, the duties, the worship, and the privileges of Christians in the language of the people of Israel. The consistency of the language of the Psalms with the spirit and the institutions of the present time, will appear from the subsequent parallelism, suggested by a comparison of the terms employed by the penmen of the Psalms with those introduced in the New Testament: unless it should be said that there is something “Jewish and cloudy” in the writings of Christ and his Apostles, which is removed by the more lucid modes of speech which some of their more spiritual followers may teach us to use:—

PSALMS.

Ps. xlv. 4. There is a river, the streams of which shall make glad *the city of God*, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. xlviii. 2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the *city of the great king*. li. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of *Jerusalem*. liii. 6. Oh that the salvation of *Israel* were come out of *Zion*! When God bringeth back the captivity of his *people*, Jacob shall rejoice, and *Israel* shall be glad.

NEW TESTAMENT.

Heb. xii. 22. But ye are come unto *mount Zion*, and unto the *city of the living God*, the heavenly *Jerusalem*. Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8. They are not all *Israel* which are of Israel: neither, because they are the *seed of Abraham*, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the *children of God*: but the *children of the promise* are counted for the *seed*. Gal. vi. 16. Peace be on them, and upon the *Israel of God*.

Ps. xxvii. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the *house of the Lord* all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his *Temple*. xlviii. 9. We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy *Temple*. lii. 8. But I am like a green *olive tree* in the *house of God*.

Ps. liv. 3. For *strangers* are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul. cxxxvii. 4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a *strange land*!

Ps. cvi. 4, 5. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto *thy people*: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of *thy chosen*, that I may rejoice in the gladness of *thy nation*, that I may glory with thine *inheritance*. cxxxii. 9. Let thy *priests* be clothed with righteousness. cxlviii. 14. He also exalteth the horn of *his people*, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a *people near unto him*.

Ps. xlii. 4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the *multitude*, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. cxxii. 3, 4. *Jerusalem* is builded as a *city* that is compact together: whither the *tribes go up*, the *tribes of the Lord*, unto the *testimony of Israel*, to give thanks unto the

Jno. ii. 19. Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this *temple*, and in three days I will raise it up. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the *temple* of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Tim. iii. 15. That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the *house of God*, which is the *church* of the living God.

Eph. ii. 19. Now, therefore, ye are no more *strangers* and *foreigners* but *fellow-citizens*, with the saints, and of the *household* of God.

1. Peter ii. 9. But ye are a *chosen generation*, a royal *priesthood*, an *holy nation*, a *peculiar people*; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you. Col. i. 12. Giving thanks unto the father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the *inheritance* of the saints in light.

Eph i. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might *gather together in one*, all *things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. Heb. 12. Ye are come unto the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and to an *innumerable company of angels*, to the *general assembly* and *church* of the first born, which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just

name of the Lord. For there are set *thrones of judgment*, the *thrones of the house of David*.

Ps. l. 5. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me *by sacrifice*. lxvi. 15. I will offer unto thee burnt *sacrifice* of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. cxviii. 27. Bind the *sacrifice* with cords, even unto the horns of the *altar*. xliii. 4. Then will I go to the *altar* of God, unto God my exceeding joy.

Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 8. By the rivers of *Babylon*, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. O daughter of Babylon, who art *to be destroyed*; *happy shall he be* that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.

men made perfect, and to *Jesus* the Mediator of the New Covenant. Lu. i. 32. The Lord God shall give unto him (Jesus) the *throne of his father David*.

Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy *priesthood*, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to God *by Jesus Christ*. Heb. xiii. 10. We have an *altar*, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.

Rev. xvii. 5. And upon her forehead was a name written. Mystery, *Babylon* the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. xviii. 20. *Rejoice over her*, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for *God* hath avenged you on her.

Before a comparison of the mode of expression used in the Psalms with that which is found in the New Testament, every objection to the use of the Songs of Zion, on account of the frequent allusions which they contain to the nature and circumstances of the religious institutions of Israel, vanishes. It is not intended to make the impression that there is no allusion to the types in the Book of Psalms, which is not found introduced by Christ and his Apostles to describe spiritual things. But we find them using figurative language derived from all the *leading* and *primary* characters of the former

economy ; and in this they furnish an evidence of the correctness and consistency of *Christians*, putting the name of the type to express the *thing typified*.

The allusions to the various musical instruments, used by the Israelites in the temple service, occasionally found in the Psalms, may be explained upon the principle to which the preceding argument conducts us, in perfect consistency with the exclusion of them all from our places of worship. The reason that I have not taken particular notice of them, as of allusions to other typical institutions, is a desire to avoid the question respecting the *mode* of singing the praises of the Lord, which is not necessarily connected with the examination of the character of the Hymns which should be introduced into the sanctuary. (1)

2. Predictions in the Psalms, and, in particular, those of which Christ is the subject, which admit of a *definite accomplishment before the consummation of all things*, are presented in a *historical* form. Had such events as are foretold in the Psalms been exhibited *as future*, we could not have used the Songs which supply the predictions that have already had their accomplishment, without pronouncing the language of expectation and hope, when we well knew that the object contemplated had become matter of fact. But the spirit has revealed them in such a form that there can remain no doubt of a designed accommodation of the Psalms

to every age, and an adaptation to permanent use in the church. Were there not unquestionable evidence of the contrary, we might be ready to suppose many of the prophetic Psalms written subsequent to the events they record, with a special view to the service of the New Testament church. Predictions, on the contrary, that do not admit of a definite fulfilment before the second coming of Christ, and are being fulfilled progressively from age to age, appear in their natural future form. These predictions, like the promises of the new covenant, whatever partial accomplishment they may have had, or to whomsoever they may have been realised in particular, are still to be fulfilled, are still the foundation of the saints' hopes, and patient expectations. We shall illustrate the preceding remarks by a few examples out of many that might be brought forward. In the second Psalm we read, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." The actual ascension of Immanuel to the right hand of the majesty on High, his formal investiture with mediatorial authority, did not take place till after his resurrection from the dead. Yet we do not read, "*I will* set," but, "*I have* set my King upon my holy hill." When an event is predicted which is progressively perfected, mark the change of tense: "*I will* declare the decree." "*I shall* give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." The exaltation of Christ is an event perfected, and past, but the subjection of the Gentiles to the sceptre of Immanuel is progressive;

is past, passing, and to come to pass, till all things shall have been subdued. Then cometh the end. The twenty-first Psalm affords another illustration. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" The Son of man has entered into his glory, he has taken possession of the joy set before him: but is his a glory which is evanescent? his a joy which is enjoyed and passes away? No. He has entered into it, and still continues in it, and must continue. Therefore the future time is used—"he *shall* joy—he *shall* rejoice." The Father's gift to him, however, of mediatorial glory is definitely perfected, and accordingly we read, "Thou *hast given* him his heart's desire, and *hast not withholden* the request of his lips." Hear one other example. (1) "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God *hath shined*." The Israelite could only use this form of speech in the exercise of that faith which is the *substance* of things hoped for. He might have said, "out of Zion, God *shall shine*." We could not. Both can unite in the language of the text. The words following are, "Our God *shall come*, and shall not keep silence." The fourth and sixth verses teach us that these words refer to his second coming—his coming to judgment. "That he may judge his people—God is judge himself." With what propriety is the future tense introduced with the change of subject! The one verse speaks of his coming to offer himself in sacrifice; it is past:—

(1) Ps. 1.

the other of his second coming; it shall be future, till faith be swallowed up in victory.

3. In those Psalms, in which Christ himself is the speaker, it would seem that he uniformly appears before us, in the last act of his life of humiliation and sorrow, just about to give up the Ghost; so that he is, as it were evidently set forth, crucified among us. We may therefore expect to find the Saviour speaking of things as past, present, or future, according to their relation to the point of time when he takes notice of them. Contemplating the objects, concerning which he discourses by the Spirit in the Psalmist, from the cross, he will be found to represent them in that aspect which they bore to himself when about to expire. The following examples may serve to illustrate and confirm the position. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—*I am* poured out like water, and all my bones *are* out of joint.—They *look* and *stare* upon me.—They *part* my garments among them, and *cast* lots upon my vesture." (1) "Into thine hand I *commit* my spirit." (2) The words of the first and last verses, which have been produced, were those which the Saviour literally uttered, when his sufferings hastened to their close. He speaks of preceding events as past. "The assembly of the wicked *have enclosed* me: they *pierced* my hands and my feet." (3) "I *have heard* the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they *took* counsel together against me, they *devised* to take

(1) Ps. xxii. 1, 14, 17, 18.

(2) Ps. xxxi. 5.

(3) Ps. xxii. 16.

away my life." (1) "*I have preached* righteousness in the great congregation : lo, *I have not refrained* my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. *I have not hid* thy righteousness within my heart ; *I have declared* thy faithfulness and thy salvation : *I have not concealed* thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." (2) The purposes, the desire, and the expectation of the expiring Jesus, except that in the eighteenth Psalm (3) he shouts victory, and anticipates, in a manner truly natural, the laurels, when the last stroke is ready to fall to the destruction of Satan and his works, are all represented so that their objects appear to be future. "Thou *wilt not leave* my soul in hell ; neither *wilt thou suffer* thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou *wilt shew* me the path of life." (4) "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." (5) "*I will abide* in thy tabernacle for ever : *I will trust* in the covert of thy wings. Thou *wilt prolong* the king's life ; and his years as many generations. He *shall abide* before God for ever." (6) "Open to me the gates of righteousness ; *I will go* into them, and *I will praise* the Lord." (7)

4. Those parts of the Mediator's privileges and trials in which his people have not only a legal interest, but have actual fellowship with him, are sometimes exhibited as *present* enjoyed or suffered, without respect to their relation to the time of

(1) Ps. xxxi. 13.

(2) Ps. xl. 9, 10.

(3) Ps. xviii. 37—43.

(4) Ps. xvi. 10.

(5) Ps. xxii. 22.

(6) Ps. xli. 4, 6, 7.

(7) Ps. cxviii. 19.

his crucifixion. Whatever his people suffer for his sake, he reckons inflicted upon himself—a filling up of that which is behind of his sufferings. The afflictions of Christ may therefore be considered present, repeated again and again in the afflictions of his members. In like manner, the special covenant favour bestowed upon the believer, may be viewed as a continuation of the Father's promised favour to the Son. The use of the present time when the joys and sorrows of Christ, in which the saints participate in very deed, are introduced to notice, while it must be considered a modification or limitation of the second and third particulars of this section, is no inconsiderable circumstance in Songs designed for the lips of his followers. “The Kings of the earth *set* themselves, and the *rulers* take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed.” (1) “He *delivereth* me from mine enemies; yea, thou *liftest* me up above those that rise up against me.” (2) “The Lord *is* their strength, and he *is* the saving strength of his anointed.” (3)

SECTION III.

The Psalms contain nothing but the language of Unwavering Faith.

“The fearful and the unbelieving” are classed by the Spirit with the most vile and those who “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” If such characters be hateful to a God of truth and holiness, the language of fear and unbelief must ever prove displeasing to him. There

(1) Ps. ii. 2.

(2) Ps. xviii. 48.

(3) Ps. xxviii. 3.

is no exercise of the heart, of the tongue, or of the hands, which the Christian is not definitely required to perform in faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The servant of Christ stands by faith, walks by faith, fights in faith, prays in faith : in one word, lives by faith ; as it is written, "I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless, I live : yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

It must, therefore, be evident that when we come into the presence of God, to celebrate his praise in a song, as faith in exercise is requisite to the acceptable performance of the solemn duty, so the language must be consistent with the state of the mind—it must be that of precious faith, unmixed with distrust and apprehension. We can never praise God in the words which fear and doubting suggest, unless God may accept as praise a declaration of distrust in his promises ; and of want of reliance upon his well beloved Son.

This premised, we observe that there is one feature by which the Book of Psalms, is distinguished from every other collection of Songs, which has been appended to it, or substituted in its place, more than this, that it does not contain one expression which faith does not warrant, and will not adopt—not one inconsistent with a cordial reliance upon the character and promises of Jehovah revealed to us in Christ. It is not asserted that the saints have not their seasons of fear,

and doubt, and perplexity. This is taken for granted in some of the Psalms, and declared in others, but as fear and doubting are not characteristic of them as holy persons, on the contrary, spring from the principle of corruption, they are not taught to approach God as if fear and faith were alike to him, though diametrically opposed to each other. In these Psalms we are called upon to contemplate the Christian worshipping before God in all the varied circumstances of life, and uniformly he is seen assured and stable : in particular,

1. "Rejoicing in hope." A vista is always open to the eye of faith, over which no cloud hangs, through which the future is discovered with a degree of clearness that reconciles to present evils, in the anticipation of the happiness about to be enjoyed. A few texts out of a multitude may suffice for the verification of this and the following particulars. (1) "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call upon him—I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." (2) "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever." (3) "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." (4) "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod

(1) Ps. iv. 3, 8.

(2) Ps. ix. 18.

(3) Ps. xx. 5.

(4) Ps. xxiii.

and thy staff, they comfort me.—Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

(1) “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear : though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set me upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me : therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.”

2. Triumphant in the freedom which the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, gives over sin and death. There is no Psalm in the use of which the professed worshipper is introduced into the gracious presence of God, either to proclaim, to the dishonour of the object of worship, his carnality and unbelief dominant, or the prevalence of carnality and unbelief in others, numbered among the children of God ; but in many he is taught to speak the praises of Him who gives strength to the weak, stability to the wavering, spirituality to the carnal, and makes the soldier of Jesus, to whatever straits he may have been reduced, more than a Conqueror. “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness ; thou

hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.”(1) “My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”(2) In the preceding passage the language of despondency is not found. The time of despondency is past, and has been succeeded by a season of confidence and hope. God is praised for having dispelled the gloomy clouds, and shone forth upon his servant with the brightness of that light which is diffused by his gracious face. The seventy-third Psalm supplies us with a very beautiful example for illustration. The inspired writer had been, as many have been, severely tried by the apparent contrariety of the dispensations of God’s providence toward the righteous and the wicked, to the principles of justice. He had nearly fallen into infidelity, and was ready to draw the conclusion that sanctification is vain, and purity unworthy of cultivation. He does not, however, suppose that the expression of his feelings while he wavered uncer-

(1) Ps. iv. 1, 7.

(2) Ps. xlii, 4.

tain whether he shall cast in his lot among the prosperous wicked, or adhere to the company of the poor and oppressed citizens of Zion, would form an acceptable song of God. The unerring Spirit has never moved a holy man to write the language of wavering, to be used in the service of God by himself or others. What else was the heart of Asaph—what his words, during the prevalence of his temptation, than a heart disposed to rebellion against the Highest—words expressive of condemnation of God's righteous government? But the exulting shout of victory, obtained through the Spirit of Grace, glorifies God, and the retrospect of past ignorance and past danger, is calculated to promote humility, leads to clearer discoveries of the "sovereign mercy of the Lord," and calls forth every energy of the man to proclaim the praises of Him, who brings good out of evil, and rescues from external and internal enemies. And the seventy third Psalm is just the shout of triumph, embracing the most humiliating confession of human weakness, the most ardent expression of love to God, the most unhesitating proclamation of his goodness, apart from all the creature's claims; nay, contrary to the creature's just desert. How correctly the language of strong feeling is presented in the beginning of it? The abruptness with which the writer introduces himself is true to nature, and at once satisfies the reader that here there is no affectation of one feeling, which the soul does not experience. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are

of a pure heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." He looks upon envy as no little sin, he assimilates it to the brink of an awful precipice over which to stumble is destruction beyond remedy. On the giddy brink he had stood, and while we read, imagination pictures him yet trembling, with the vivid recollection of the danger from which he was only saved. Having described the character and situation of some wicked from a view of which his envy had taken its rise, he adds, "Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." "I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Is this not the language of unbelief and of distrust? "Doth his promise fail for ever more?" Not in the lips of the inspired

penman when writing: not as constituting a part of the song. It is a painful and humiliating review of the unbelieving weakness of past days, over which faith has triumphed. For it is immediately added, "And I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old." (1) One more example, and I do not urge the induction farther. "Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thy anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land." (2)

3. "Patient in tribulation." The evils of which we have been speaking, are moral either in their own nature, or in their operation. As they are contrary to the fruits of faith, we do not find them introduced, as present, with the worshipper, in any of the Songs of Zion. The evils which we notice under the head of tribulation are natural, and their presence implies nothing contrary to the most lively workings, of the principle of Faith. Where faith exists, "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." And if the Book of Psalms embrace nothing but the effusions

(1) Ps. lxxvii. 6—11.

(2) Ps. lxxxv. 5—8.

of faith, we may expect to find patience, experience, and the assurance of hope that never makes ashamed, exemplified in the midst of the sharpest outward afflictions. When we read, our expectations are not disappointed. The language which the Psalms hold when presenting the afflicted state of God's people, is uniformly of the following character. "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" "The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Consider mine enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed; for *I put my trust in thee.*" (1) Observe (first), he traces all his afflictions to their proper source—his sin, and thus teaches us his resignation. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins." (Second) His faith is implied in his importunate supplication for deliverance from the cause and the effect—sin and sorrow, and is expressed in the argument by which he urges his petition. "For I put my trust in thee." "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. All this is come upon us; yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant." "I poured out my complaint before

him ; I showed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, *then thou knewest my path*. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me ; refuge failed me ; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord : I said, *Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.*" (1)

4. "Continuing instant in prayer." The reader of the Scripture does not need to be taught that the prayer of *faith* is imperatively required. The man of prayer has his instructions laid before him by Christ and his Apostles, very perspicuously. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Here both sides of one great truth are exhibited:—that the prayer of faith is always answered,—that to the prayer of unbelief God has not given us any reason to expect an answer.

The Book of Psalms contains very many prayers, offered up on various occasions, but they are all the prayers of faith. The man, whose heart closes

(1) Ps. xliv. 13—17 ; cxlii. 2—5.

with the language of the song which contains any given petition, offers up that petition in faith; his prayer is founded upon a Divine promise, he prays according to the will of God, and he is in no danger of asking any thing amiss, to be consumed upon his lusts. Take the following specimen of prayers presented by them who *use* the songs of Zion. "Have mercy upon me, O God; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou *that liftest me up* from the gates of death: that I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughters of Zion; *I will rejoice in thy salvation.*"(1) The concluding clause assures us that the suppliant confidently anticipates an answer. "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But *I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*"(2) "I have called upon thee, *for thou wilt hear me*, O God."(3) That this is a prayer of faith, will be apprehended at once. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; *so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*" "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my Rock; be not silent to me; lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit."(4) The supplication extends to the end of the fifth verse, and in the sixth verse we read, "Blessed be the Lord, because *he hath*

(1) Ps. ix. 12, 14.

(2) Ps. xiii. 3—5.

(3) Ps. xvii. 6.

(4) Ps. xviii. 3; xxviii. 1.

heard the voice of my supplications." Is not this a form of words most appropriately addressed to that God, who promises, "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

The exhibition of the spirit of faith, breathing in the Psalms, might be extended, so as to include a reference to every part of the collection. Moreover, in order to demonstrate their claim upon the assemblies of Mount Zion, it would be no unprofitable exercise to contrast them with the different compilations of uninspired Hymns or Songs presented to the Church, and unrighteously substituted for the Psalms given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I presume in all, with which I am acquainted, there will be found language, that does not bespeak the exercise of faith in him who employs it. The Songs of Zion do not number *one* among them adapted to the individual that has not yet been delivered from the slavery of sin, or that has not yet learned to mourn after a godly sort;—in one word, to the unbeliever and impenitent. And I have yet to learn a song that would suit such, to sing which, and to call it praise, would not be as grossly insulting to the Deity, as the character of the impenitent and unbeliever is hateful to unspotted purity. (1)

If a clear and full revelation of the Saviour, in his person, offices, and work; if the absence of every thing purely national and temporary; if a phraseology accurately accommodated to the

church, independently of every change through which she may pass, whether that change affect her external condition, or her internal organization; if an undeviating expression of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God, prove a collection of songs suitable to Christian worshippers, a doubt cannot be entertained that the Psalms of David are recommended by their adaptation to the spiritual worship of that God, who is a Spirit, and demands worship in spirit and in truth.

Hear the testimony of "The Editor of the Bible with the Notes of Several of the Venerable Reformers," as recorded by H. Horne. True: human testimony can never be admitted as *authority* in the decision of the question, respecting the adaptation of the Psalms to our times; but surely the testimony of one uninspired writer, in their favour, is quite as good as the testimony of another, against them, and for that reason I give a place to his words. "The language in which Moses, and David, and Solomon, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, worshipped God, is applicable to Christian believers. They worship the same God through the same adorable Redeemer; they give thanks for similar mercies, and mourn under similar trials; they are looking for the same blessed hope of their calling, even everlasting life and salvation, through the prevailing intercession of the Messiah." (1)

The united testimony of Gray and Bishop Horne shall close the examination of the last fact. "The

(1) Int. iv. p. 95.

expressions and descriptions of the Psalms may seem to some persons to have been appropriate and peculiar to the Jewish circumstances; and David indeed, employs figures and allusions applicable to the old dispensation. But as, in recording temporal deliverances and blessings vouchsafed to the Jews, we commemorate spiritual advantages thereby signified, we use the Psalms with the greatest propriety in our Church. 'We need,' says an elegant commentator, 'but substitute the Messiah for David, the Gospel for the Law, and the Church of Christ for the Church of Israel; we need but consider the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, as the emblems of spiritual service, of which every part hath its correspondent figure; and we appropriate the Psalms to our own uses, as the noblest treasure of inspired wisdom.'" (1)

Without multiplying testimonies, which the great and the good have given, to the unrivalled beauties of the Songs of Zion, and their adaptation to the state of believers even in this age, we shall hasten to a conclusion.

(1) Gray's Key, 220.

CONCLUSION.

THE subject which has been discussed in the preceding pages, is not more important in itself, than on account of its connection with a variety of high theological questions. The more carefully it is investigated, the more will Christians be persuaded that the decision to which they may come deeply involves the interests of truth in general, and must give a tinge to almost their whole religious system. I am well aware that many do not, at present fully apprehend its bearing upon the cause of revealed religion, and the aspect of the Church of Christ in the world, but seem to consider it an isolated object of thought. But the effect of an erroneous decision upon the part of the disciples of Jesus, will not fail to follow, though they do not know the cause, nor comprehend its operation. There is such an entire oneness in the doctrines of the Gospel, that adherence to one error necessarily involves an inconsistency, to escape which, when perceived, must lead to a renunciation of the error, or, what not less frequently happens, the adoption of others to protect one. There is such an intimate connection of all ordinances with those doctrines, that a reciprocal action between religious opinions and the observance

of religious institutions is constant. A corruption of the doctrine of Christ must lead to a corruption of divine institutions, and a departure from the simplicity of a divine prescript is necessarily followed by a laxity of principle, if not an unmasked renunciation of the form of sound words. (1) Not a few are of opinion, that the effects of the abandonment of an inspired collection of Songs, and the substitution of expository compositions, are already visible and demonstrable. I am not so minutely acquainted with the history of the introduction of uninspired songs, in connection with the state of religion in those Churches where they are used, as to risk an opinion upon this point ; but when we compare the present condition of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, which steadfastly adhere to the Psalms of David, with that of those in which they have been set aside, there does not appear a superiority in the latter sufficient to create a presumption, in favour of the purifying and peaceful tendency of the introduction of modern, and, as some suppose, more evangelical Psalms.

In the examination of the question, Whether it be consistent with the revealed will of God, whether it be required of us, strictly to adhere to the Bible Psalms, free from a consciousness of any motive, private, selfish, or unworthy of a minister of Jesus, I have not sought to enlist in my favour the prejudices of those who are partial to their introduction or

(1) See an expanded illustration of this in the "Philosophy of Sectarianism," by Blaikie. Boston, 1854.

continuance, and have studiously avoided uncalled for remarks, calculated to wound the feelings of professors, who have been accustomed to the use of uninspired Songs in the Church. The reason is, that of the latter there may be many who have never had their attention particularly directed to the subject of Psalmody,—never have heard a doubt suggested of the propriety of laying aside inspired Psalms, in favour of others which they had been accustomed to hear invariably represented as more suitable to the New Testament dispensation, and could not, with propriety, be addressed in common with men, who, having every advantage and excitement to the inquiry, carelessly turn their eyes from viewing it, rudely spurn the subject when brought before them, or, in a pride of their own sufficiency, pour contempt upon every argument which is directed against their own opinions and practices; and on the other hand, there may be multitudes adhering to scriptural forms, from no better principle than others cleave to those which are unwarranted and anti-scriptural. The form of godliness does not imply the power. Those, therefore, who act upon the principle, which it is the object of the preceding pages to defend, should beware lest their own practice stand in the wisdom of man and not in the power of God; for if they adhere to scriptural doctrines and institutions merely because they have been habituated to them from infancy, or have heard them set forth by ministers and parents, though not in the same degree, they are as truly

the followers of men, as he is, who is in principle erroneous, and in practice, guided by another law than Christ's.

The use of David's Psalms in the churches of Christ is no innovation. The deviation from them, which is the real innovation, has been introduced with culpable haste, and, it is to be feared, without a due examination of their high claims. Till the unbending integrity, the painful and persevering investigation of all questions which interested the lovers of scriptural truth, the uncompromising adherence to sound doctrine, and the stern opposition to every error, to every errorist in the defence of his unholy principles, (called of late *bigotry* and *illiberality*;) which characterised the champions of the Reformation, had passed away, and been replaced by that spurious and misnamed *Charity*, which would prohibit the necessary distinction between truth and error to be marked; which would pronounce the man proud, self-righteous, and illiberal who dares to say the principles which are opposed to his profession are false and dangerous—in other words, say that he cannot believe both sides of a contradiction; would identify a professor and his opinions, and proclaim the enemy of his opinion his personal foe; there was no attempt to displace the inspired Psalms—there was none to prove them unholy and unchristian. The Reformers never thought of looking for their Hymns but to the Psalter. It was Luther's "little book of all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall

find Psalms and sentiments, which shall apply to his case, and be the same to him, as if they were, for his own sake alone, so expressed, that he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are."

Nor is the use of the Psalms of David confined to a few inconsiderable and illiterate individuals, even now. I rejoice that the cause, for which I am an humble advocate, is above the stigma, that it is the cause either of a party, or of the ignorant and superstitious. It is the cause of Presbyterians, in every part of the British empire, with a very few exceptions, and these not likely to give a tone to public sentiment, or to exert a very extensive influence in directing public practice. It is the cause of the Church of England. Upon the subject of the Psalms, Episcopalians and Presbyterians are, in principle, perfectly agreed. They differ merely in this, that they use different versions.

Many seem to think the subject of the Psalms, to be used by the assemblies of Mount Zion, of little moment; that it is a matter of indifference whether, for instance, we use Rouse's *version*, or Watt's imitation, and therefore put the question aside as unprofitable and vain. One thing they shall find vain indeed—to attempt to evade the inquiry into the claims of Zion's Songs. It may be postponed, but it cannot be evaded. Ultimately it must come forward, it will press itself, with resistless force, into notice: and God is never without the means of directing universal attention to one

point. The world has frequently been surprised to find the minds of Christians, in the most widely divided countries, called almost simultaneously into exercise respecting subjects that had very partial notice before. It is unnecessary to enumerate instances with which all are familiar.

The divisions which have obtained, and at present exist in the Church, upon doctrinal and practical questions, are, it must be admitted, at variance with the spirit of Christianity, and had they not been predicted, and the cause to which they are to be ascribed been pointed out, must have excited astonishment, since all are ready to appeal to one correct and consistent word. The contemplation of them is a source of anguish to every mind which unites piety and sensibility. A desire to see them terminated, and a union of all the disciples of Christ effected, upon principles that promise stability to the pacification, will consequently put the friends of truth and peace upon the investigation of the causes which conspire to perpetuate discord among brethren. And surely if one practice be discovered, which is calculated to prevent the "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace," they will not hesitate for a moment with regard to the course they are to pursue. The practice which produces or promotes division cannot be scriptural. That is obvious. Such is the use of the supposed liberty of Christians to compose Hymns for themselves or others in the worship of God. The use of that supposed liberty will not merely prove the occasion but the cause

of the perpetuity of division. So long as parties hold different opinions, it would be vain to expect that the Hymn-books composed by conflicting partisans, should not partake of the opposition of their authors, unless they should purposely employ equivocal language, or, as one has chosen to express the same thing, "expressions" which "may savour of an opinion different from the readers," but "are capable of an *extensive sense*, and may be used with a *charitable latitude*." So long then as different parties persevere in the use of their respective collections of songs exhibiting their peculiar and distinguishing opinions, and opposed one to another, unity is impossible—union can never be carried into effect. Conflicting Hymn-books imply existing division, and must form a wall of partition which cannot be passed—which must be taken out of the way. But who shall yield to the other? It is not to be hoped that one shall yield to another. It is not desired. What course is more likely to present itself as practicable? Remove from the sanctuary every uninspired collection, call it Psalms, Hymns, what you will; and let all parties take up that from which none can dissent—the Psalms of David. A desire of union and concord must bring the claims of the Book of Psalms before the Church: and upon the altar of union and peace, it is most plain, every uninspired collection of songs, as to their use in the house of God, must be offered a sacrifice.

But have we any reason to hope for that oneness

of opinion, which would peremptorily demand what many should think so expensive a sacrifice? The desire of union may bring forward a new subject of discussion, perhaps of division to no purpose. Shall that desire be gratified? The ultimate union of Christians is quite as certain as it is desirable. God has promised it, and it shall come to pass. He will carry forward his own work; and though hand be pledged in hand to keep them up, he will remove the barriers out of the way. He will constrain the people to hearken to the voice of him, who desires unity in the body of Christ, and to break down every wall of separation. There is an old prediction which has not yet been fulfilled; and which speaks with power in relation to this matter. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord bring again Zion." "With the voice together shall they sing." Then they shall use the same song. There shall not exist Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, expressive of conflicting sentiments. "They shall see eye to eye." Then they shall be united in their views and speak the same thing. It is deserving of very particular notice that the unity which is predicted is pointed out as the cause why they shall sing together. "Together shall they sing, *for* they shall see eye to eye."

But some will say, the Songs in the use of which they shall unite, may not be the Psalms of David. Let them prove that they shall not. And in the

mean time, till another book shall have been produced, by an inspired, or uninspired hand, or by the collective wisdom of brighter days, in the use of which all shall agree, let us meet together in the use of the only one, the infallible correctness of which all must admit, that at present exists; lest, while we are stickling for a doubtful liberty, pleasing ourselves with the external beauties, the graceful movement, and enchanting voice of the uninspired poet, we be found the enemies of peace in the Church, and haply fighting against God.

"ARISE, O GOD, PLEAD THINE OWN CAUSE."

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—Page 15.

Whether the Psalms, in a Translation, can be considered Inspired Psalms.

"The preference of a human to a divine Book of Psalms, has forced the advocates of that preference, to assume a position, that deprives the Church of God at large of his Word, as the ground of faith, except those of her members who may be learned in the original tongues, in which the Scriptures were first written. For, if as faithful a version of the Bible, as can be obtained, has no claim to be called the Word of God, as some suppose, then the faith of the great majority of saints, in every age, has been built on a sandy foundation, the word of man.—McMaster's "*Apology*," Ballston-Spa, 1818, pp. 118, 119.

"There neither is nor can be any such thing as the *inspired forms* of the Psalms in our language, unless an immediate revelation were made in that language: it is not possible to retain the words and phrases of the original in any translation; as a prophet is to speak in the language which is suggested to him, his words are justly called the words of the Holy Ghost; but whenever a translation of that subject is made into any other language, the words of the language into which it is translated, are no more the words of the Holy Ghost, than Greek is English."—Black's "*Examination*," quoted by Anderson, pp. 82, 83.

"My objection to the principle, that we are exclusively restricted to the use of the Psalms, is this: that if they cannot with propriety be used by us in their original form, they cannot have been intended to be used by us in our Psalmody; but my opponent says—If they are not fit for our use, we can make them fit for it; which does not at all meet the objection. I allow that we can distil them, and separate the spirit from the grosser materials with which it is combined in them; but when that is done, they are only *human compositions*, in which a portion of the divine original has been retained."—"Eastern Chronicle," Pictou, N. S., Jan. 10, 1854, "*Hymns of human composition in the worship of God*," signed "T."

Perhaps none of the readers of the *Eastern Chronicle* doubt to whom the article from which we have quoted, or another upon the same subject, Sept. 27, 1853, is to be ascribed; but as the writer has chosen to occupy a position secluded from public view, and to reduce his name to a cypher, it would be indelicate to draw him forth from his retirement, and expose the blushes of diffidence to the rude gaze of unfeeling onlookers. There is cause to blush. To whatever respect the individual, who has adopted the signature "T," may be entitled in *propria persona*, "T" is entitled to no more respect than the article so subscribed. It is scarcely worth while to criticise very exactly an article written for a local newspaper, yet there is something rather calculated to excite surprise, in finding the man, who "could pick out a list of unaccountable mistakes, with very little trouble, from every one of new and improved translations of ten or a dozen books of the Old Testament, by Hebrew scholars of the highest standing," writing the condemnation of Rouse's doggerel, (Sept. 23, 1853) in a communication, in the first three paragraphs of which, *there is not one correct English sentence.*

That the only use of language is to communicate thought or feeling, is a mere truism, in its application to a revelation from God, as liberally as in the matter of the interchange of ideas between man and man. But there is no stereotyped combination of sounds necessary to express a particular idea, or train of ideas. To impart the same state of mind, different persons are found using forms of speech as numerous as are the individuals giving utterance to the thought. To use the language of the *Christian Observer*, upon a kindred subject, as quoted by Dr. Carson: "Take a familiar example; a parent says separately to four children, 'Call your brother Richard.' One simply repeats the message as the words of his parent, 'Richard, my father desires me to call you.' A second makes the message his own, 'Richard, my father wants you.' A third repeats it as an injunction, 'Richard, you must go to my father.' The fourth, 'Brother Richard, pray run directly to our dear father, for he wants to speak to you.'" Are not all these exactly the father's message? and is it to contravene this proposition to say, that each was delivered in a manner characteristic of the respective speakers?"

The same individual does not always express the same thought by the same combination of words, or even by the same words. For the sake of greater elegance, perspicuity, effect, or simply variety, different forms of speech are used by a speaker, or writer, when he has not the least design of adding to what he has said, or of introducing a modification of the idea to be expressed. And if in the same language, the same communication is made by different speakers, or the same speaker, in different words, why should a difficulty be raised, as if the infor-

mation to be imparted is not given, and we are not indebted to the original source, because an entirely different tongue is employed to embody the original conception. A Physician prescribes to different patients, speaking as many different languages, but labouring under the same disease. He speaks to each in his own language; but who will say the prescriptions are not identical, because they are enunciated in different tongues? Absurdity itself would hardly venture so broad a statement as that they are not precisely the same. The case is only slightly modified, if we suppose the physician acquainted with one language, and under the necessity of communicating with all his patients, except one, by means of an interpreter or interpreters. If he express himself ambiguously or defectively, the interpreters may misunderstand him, and give instructions to the patients different from what he intended; or they may commit the same error from an imperfect acquaintance with the language of the Physician or the patients. But assuming that the Physician has expressed his prescription accurately and lucidly, and that the interpreters perfectly understand both the language of the Physician and that of his patients, and honestly communicate to each, in his own tongue, the mind of the Physician, no person would hesitate to ascribe to him the direction given to the sick, although he understands not the words in which it is expressed, more than if all who are under his care spake a language common to him and them, and received instructions immediately from his own lips. The interpreter is not transmuted into the Doctor, nor is he, in any sense, the author of the given prescription.

Life and Death depend, in many cases, upon the recognition of the identity of that which is expressed in different languages. An individual is arraigned for murder. The witness in attendance, to testify to the guilt of the prisoner, speaks a language which is not understood by the Court or the Jury. His evidence must be received through an interpreter. The peculiar idioms of the language in which the interrogations are put may be lost in making them intelligible to the witness; and, on the other hand, the peculiar forms of expression used by the witness, in giving his answers in his own tongue, may not appear in the language in which they are presented to the Court; yet the testimony may, and may be accordingly regarded as complete and decisive. The panel objects that the testimony of the witness is not before the Court; but he is condemned, and handed over to the ministers of justice for execution, although the witness may not have understood a word uttered in the course of the proceedings, except what was spoken by the interpreter; and neither the Bench, the Bar, the Jury, or the Prisoner, may have understood one word, as it fell from the lips of the witness.

The same remarks may be made with respect to the official

correspondence, which passes between different Courts, at which different languages are spoken.

"Who hath made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord?" God speaks all languages. They are all his. He made the communications of his will to the Old Testament Church, in the vernacular tongue of the people—in Hebrew. Taking the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures for granted, the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Prophets secures the accurate and adequate expression of the mind of God. Because the revelation which God has made appears in another tongue, it is not less his. Suppose the translation correct (and there is no difficulty arising out of ambiguity in the original) the idiomatic forms of the Hebrew may disappear, and certain peculiarities of expression, which might have been deemed beauties, by one to whom the Hebrew was vernacular, but which do not at all correspond with the phraseology of another language, may evaporate in a translation; yet we have no more reason to sustain us, in denying that we have in the translation, the prophecies of Jeremiah, for instance, or the Psalms of David, or the word of the Lord by Jeremiah or David, than the Judge has to sustain him in asserting that the testimony of the witness is not before the Court, because that testimony was presented through an interpreter; or the ministers of the British Sovereign, in denying that, because a letter from the Emperor of China, transmitted in the Chinese tongue, appears only in an English version, the Emperor's missive is not before them.

Mr. "T." the correspondent of the *Eastern Chronicle*, (Sept. 27th, 1853) says: "The trope or figure of speech, called *paronomasia*, or a play upon words, which is akin to punning, consisting in the bringing together of words, that resemble each other in sound, but differ in meaning, and is now placed in the very lowest grade of wit, is pretty freely used in the Psalms, as in all the other poetical and sententious parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. Again, the double meanings, which belong to the same category, and consists in the repetition of the same word, but in a different sense, is also not unfrequent. It is a kind of puzzle; and calculated first to perplex, and then to tickle the reader, when he solves the difficulty. Both figures are allied to joking; but what would we think of joking, or indeed any kind of pleasantry, in a Psalm or Hymn?"

Now, I am not prepared, and am not disposed to deny the use of the figure *Paronomasia* in the Psalms; nor to argue with Mr. "T." in vindication of the Holy Spirit from descending to the "lowest grade of wit," and *tickling* the Hebrews by his condescending *jokes*, that he might arrest their attention and promote their edification; or from associating with "Lawyers' clerks and draper's apprentices," (some of whom, by the way, are persons whom Mr. "T." need not blush to own as associates)

in practising the art of the punster. Nor will I assert that "the very first words of the first Psalm, *Ashrei, Asher, Aish,*" were not "selected on account of their resemblance in sound to one another." But I may be permitted to doubt. I do not know the pronunciation of the Hebrew words. Neither does Mr. "T." His marvellous discoveries of *puns*, and *puzzles*, and *jokes*, assume an exact knowledge of the pronunciation, when the Hebrew was a living language. Should Mr. "T." be raised up from the dead two thousand years hence, and find the English a dead language, and find a solitary collection of pieces in prose and verse, saved from the wreck of English literature, he would have no right to smile at the ignorance of the "T."s of the thirty-ninth century, if he found them sadly puzzled to discover that *Scotch snuff* would rhyme with *grog enough*, and disposed to stare at our "T.," if he should inform them that, in the worse than Rouse's doggerel,

*"Should Wood intrude in drunken guise,
And rudely goodly men surprise,"*

the very first three words of the first line, the second and third of the second line, and the closing words of the two lines, were "selected on account of their resemblance in sound to one another." Without any impeachment of their understanding and attainments, they might think they had discovered an example of the repetition of the same word, but in a different sense,—a kind of puzzle, calculated first to perplex, and then to tickle the reader—allied to joking, in "bandage *wound* about the *wound* of the disabled soldier," till our eastern "T.," more wise in the department of English philology, taught them that the same combination of letters, occurring the second time, did not constitute the same word at all.

But allowing all the deformities of Hebrew composition, which have been brought to light by Mr. "T." to be real, not imaginary, we may congratulate the Church, that the Hebrew is no longer a living language—that worshippers can be no longer bound up to the use of the original, and that in a correct translation, we have still the *Word of God*, a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path, free, of necessity, from all the *low puns*, *perplexing puzzles*, and *tickling jokes*, so offensive to refined modern taste, and to Mr. "T."

If we have not the Psalms of David, because those Songs are presented to us through the medium of a translation, which sinks the distinctive peculiarities of Hebrew composition, neither have we any other portion of a revelation from God. As "they cannot with propriety be used by us in their original form," if this circumstance prove that "they cannot have been intended to be used by us in our psalmody," that we cannot with more propriety use any other section of the divine word in its original form, proves, by parity of reason, that it cannot have been

intended to be used by us, for the same purpose for which the Israelite or the Jew used it. If the inevitable results of translation, prove that what was intended to be *sung* in the original ought not to be *sung* in translation, the same or similar results must prove that what was intended to be *read* in the original, ought not to be *read* in translation. Others might reason thus: the peculiarities of one language must, of course, disappear in any translation of what was originally written in that language. But poetry is not a peculiarity of any language, nor is song a peculiarity of any people. Whatever, therefore, was given to be sung was intended to be sung by all for whom it is given. Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the earth are come.

The views of the inspired writers coincide with the results of the preceding exposition. The New Testament is written in Greek, and our Lord delivered his discourses in the vernacular tongue of Judea. Have the Evangelists transmitted to us his words? They profess to have done so. Still we have nothing but a translation. It may be said we have an *inspired* translation. True. But it is a translation nevertheless. As Jesus had the Spirit given to him without measure, and he spake by the Spirit, his words are *inspired* words. These are not before us in the Greek of the Evangelists, except as they are represented by the terms of a language he did not use. The verbal inspiration of the Gospels cannot invalidate this statement. It insures simply the correctness of the translation; and we thus learn that we must recognise a faithful translation of the Word of God, as possessing all the authority of the inspired word. In confirmation of this conclusion: "The words of the translations which we have in the New Testament of passages of the old, are called *the words of the Prophets*, or what is equivalent, the *sayings of the Holy Spirit*. (John xii. 38.) *That the saying or word of Isaias the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he said, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* (Acts xv. 15, 16.) *And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, after this I will return, &c.* (Heb. iii. 7.) *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice.* The Apostle afterwards calls our attention to the words *to-day*, which is one word in the original, as the very word or expression of the Holy Ghost. (v. 13.) Another instance is remarkable, in the twelfth chapter of the same book: *Now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word ONCE MORE signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made.* Thus the translated passages of the Old Testament, in the New, are called the words of the prophets, and of the Holy Spirit who spake by them: and this warrants us to call the translated Psalms, the words of David, and of the Holy Spirit, who spake by him."—*Anderson's Vindiciæ Cantus Dominici*, pp. 85. 86.

Finally, the inspired writers of the New Testament quote literally, at times, from the Septuagint, an uninspired translation of the Old Testament. For example, in the third chapter of Hebrews, referred to above, Paul quotes more than four verses from the translation of the ninety-fourth Psalm by the *Seventy* (ninety-fifth in the Hebrew and English), and unequivocally represents that translation as the *saying of the Holy Ghost*.

NOTE B.—Page 29.

It is a source of no small gratification to find that the views of inspiration, which I ventured to publish in Nova Scotia in 1834, were exhibited the same year in Britain under the *imprimatur* of such a man as ROBERT HALDANE, Esq., in his excellent work on "*The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation*." A short statement from that work is here transcribed. "Our knowledge of the inspiration of the Bible, like every other doctrine it contains, must be collected from itself. The words of Scripture, indeed, as used by the writers, were their own words. But this does convey the idea that the Bible is partly the word of God, and partly the word of Man. It is not the effect of any such co-operation, as supposes that one part was produced by God, and the other part by man, to make out a whole. Because the words were written by the Prophets and Apostles, this does not prevent them from being the word of God. The following remarks of President Edwards, when he is combating the deeply erroneous sentiment of the Armenians respecting a co-operation between God and man in the work of grace, will explain this matter:—'In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, *viz.*, our own acts. God is the only proper author and foundation: we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive, and wholly active. In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and to turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text—God worketh in you to will and to do.'

"The difference of style which we find among these writers does not at all conclude against their having the words they were to write imparted to them. The style that God was pleased to employ was used, and the instruments were such as that style was natural to, flowing, like the words, with their full consent,

and according to the particular tone of their minds, while they yielded to the impression as voluntary and intelligent agents. The Holy Spirit could dictate to them his own words, in such a way that they would also be their words, uttered with the understanding. He could speak the same thought by the mouth of a thousand persons, each in his own style. If variety of expression in relating the same things in the Gospel, would not affect the truth of the narrative, on the supposition that the writers were uninspired men, why is it presumed that it would affect it on the supposition of their being inspired?"—*Vol. I.*, pp. 158. 163-4-5.

NOTE C.—Page 30.

Freedom of the Divine Word from Error.

As the Word of God, the Scriptures claim a careful investigation, and the connexion between the knowledge of them and wisdom unto salvation, invests the study with the deepest personal interest. Contentment with a superficial acquaintance with the Bible is at once impious and foolish. As a subject of study, the Scriptures are inexhaustible. Besides, there is an inexpressible satisfaction in the pursuit of Scriptural knowledge, arising out of the circumstance that there is no danger of being involved in error. What is learned from the Bible is something, of the truth of which we are assured.

The productions of the most learned and accurate uninspired writer may often be found to contain statements, involving principles that he would not acknowledge, because he never intended to teach the doctrines, that may be legitimately deduced from the premises which he supplied. A reconsideration sometimes leads to a modification of the statement which had been made, for the purpose of avoiding the necessary inference. Sometimes a clear view of inferences, which cannot be sustained, is the means of bringing conviction of the error of the position which justified them, and leading to its abandonment. But God, who directed the mental operations and the utterance of Prophets and Apostles, has not only the most perfect apprehension of the import of every proposition, enunciated under his direction, but of all the inferences which may be legitimately drawn from that proposition, however remote the connection between the premises and the conclusion. Every thing implied in an inspired statement is as much of God, as true, as authoritative, as the statement which implies it; and those, to whom the word is sent, are responsible for the neglect of the investigation of such implied communications. The Lord charges the Sadducees with ignorance of the Scriptures, and consequent error, not because they denied an explicit statement of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, found in the Old Testa-

ment (for there is no such statement); but because they did not recognise a necessary deduction from the words of God, addressed to Moses from the burning bush. Paul represents David as describing the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, although the word righteousness does not occur in the passage to which he refers for confirmation, and the idea of "righteousness without works" is only exhibited by inference from the Psalmist's statement.

The circumstance just mentioned supplies a curious evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures. It would be very singular if, in a work written by various individuals, of diversified talent, of different ages, and speaking of multifarious topics, involving a reference to all departments of nature, there should not occur a single expression, involving views of subjects that came properly under the cognisance of the philosopher. Now, we have reason to believe that most of the inspired writers were strangers to science, perhaps we may say that the Israelites were unacquainted with the secrets of nature that modern science has brought to light. But if the inspired writers have used an expression, which implies a contradiction to an ascertained fact in literature or science, then they cannot have written under the superintendence of Him to whom all things are known. This matter is lucidly stated by Dr. Carson, in his peculiarly nervous terms. "But observes Mr. Wilson, 'The Bible was not given us to make us poets, or orators, or historians, or natural philosophers.' Very true, very true, but very silly. We must overlook the bad poetry, and bad oratory, of the Bible, if we find any of this description in it; and we have no reason to expect a complete history of human affairs, nor a system of natural philosophy. But, verily, if the Scriptures contain one rule of poetry or oratory, that rule must be a legitimate one, or the Bible is a forgery. And if it tells one historical untruth, it must forfeit its pretensions in every thing, seeing its pretensions extend to every thing in the book. The inspired writers may have been ignorant of natural philosophy, as the most ignorant of British peasants, without affecting their inspiration. But, verily, if they have delivered one philosophical dogma, it must either be true, or the Scriptures as a whole are false. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' This pledges God equally for every thing in the Bible."—"*Theories of Inspiration*," *Edin.*, pp. 27, 28.

As the truth of the Newtonian system was confirmed by inferring astronomical facts, not previously known, which subsequent observation verified, so the truth of Revelation obtains additional and independent confirmation, from involving truths which it was not intended directly to teach, but which enlarged and accurate knowledge of the works of God fully establishes. The Scriptures inferred the possibility of pulverising gold,

before modern chemistry was equal to the process. Whether Solomon understood the circulation of the blood or not, his language, in the last chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes, obviously implies the fact. And when Paul tells the Corinthians that they are "one bread and one body," he teaches, whether he was acquainted with the fact or not, that the food which we eat is converted into the substance of our material bodies. Grant the inspiration of the Scriptures, and we may rest assured that any doctrine in science, however remotely implied, shall be found as true, as any doctrine involved in the system of grace : and Christians, without anxiety, may abide the developments of science, when supposed facts militate against unequivocal scriptural conclusions.

Geology has placed the Divine Word once more in the furnace. My total ignorance of Geology, and of geological theories, forbids me to attempt to reason upon the subject of the accordance of Revelation and Geology, yet I may be excused for supposing it possible, that as God created man in a state that, in the judgment of those who know man only as passing from infancy to maturity, might seem to infer an age of thirty years, so he may have formed the world in a state that would indicate an existence of as many milleniums; and that those who attempt to expound the structure of the human body from having examined the scratch of a pin upon its surface, may find themselves mistaken in their deductions. Still, when I reflect upon the character of a Miller and a King, who have extensively and enthusiastically explored the geological field, my desire to maintain the absolute integrity of the Divine word, does not forbid the admission of the possibility, that I may yet be an enthusiastic, although my age, (if there were no more serious obstacle,) forbids the expectation that I can ever be a learned geologist.

NOTE D.—Page 38.

Authority of the Word of God.

The statements contained in the text are fully sustained by the following quotations. The first is from a most masterly production, and is intended to show that in the Bible we see God, hear God, feel the presence of God, and of none else. "The Bible is in many respects a singular volume. Its mode of announcing doctrines and delivering precepts is altogether peculiar. Its promises and threatenings, too, are delivered with a brevity, and announced with a majesty, essentially its own. Incidents and events, whether calamitous, tragical, infamous, heroic, fortunate, or even ludicrous, are recorded without a single remark. Not a sentence is allowed to escape, enabling us to infer the individual opinions, sentiments, or emotions, of

the several writers at the time the narration was composed. While these singular writers are exciting in their readers every varied passion, emotion, or feeling, of which the human heart is susceptible, they seem elevated themselves above the regions of sympathy.—*Arnott's "Theocracy of the Bible," Edin., p. 135.*

The following is from a volume, full of curious, interesting, and instructive matter:—"The Apostles were careful to exhibit in their own practice, the same unqualified submission to all the commandments of Christ, which they enjoined upon others. Neither Moses nor the Apostles thought of changing the institutions of the God of Heaven, or adding one invention of their own, any more than Sir Isaac Newton thought of changing the order and revolutions of the Solar System; or the chemist or mineralogist thinks of changing the properties of matter, or arranging anew the strata of which the earth is composed. None bowed with profounder deference than they did to the oracles of God. They adored Divine Wisdom no less wherein she was silent, than wherein she spoke. When no voice came from the throne of the Eternal, silence reigned among them. They commenced their inspired career with the lowly maxim of, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,' and prefaced every communication to their fellow men with, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Go, Christian, and learn from the deference often paid to superior intelligence among men, the profound veneration with which thou oughtest to receive the wisdom of God."—*McLeod's "View of Inspiration," Glasgow, pp. 561-2-5.*

"The New Testament, continually proceeding upon and referring to the Old, could not be well understood without it. Some things are far more fully revealed in the Old Testament, as the creation, and the variety of great and precious promises which God has given us. Since the Old Testament is a rule as well as the New, we are *bound* to imitate an approved example of the observation of any ordinance of God's worship, which is not ceremonial, though it be found in the Old Testament only. And therefore, unless the singing of the Book of Psalms could be shewn to be a ceremonial institution, we are *bound* to imitate the example of it recorded in the Old Testament.—*Ander-son's Vindiciæ, &c., pp. 81-2.*

NOTE E.—Page 43.

Language used by the opponents of David's Psalms.

Let any one who loves the house of God, and desires conformity to the Divine standard, in the administration of divine ordinances, having a predilection for the uninspired Hymns, read with care the representations, which the advocates of an uninspired Psalmody have made of the Psalms of David, and it

will be strange if doubts do not arise respecting the propriety of a practice, the advocacy of which demands such reproachful exhibitions of the words of inspiration. The preface to Doctor Watts' Hymns and Spiritual Songs comprehends, with relation both to the spirit and the letter of the Psalms of David, language utterly at variance with the recognition of their inspiration. He thus writes:—"I have long been convinced that one great occasion of this evil (the flattening of devotion, awakening of regret, and touching all the springs of uneasiness within us,) arises from the *matter* and the *words* to which we confine all our songs. Some of them are *almost opposite* to the spirit of the Gospel; many of them foreign to the state of the New Testament, and widely different from the present circumstances of Christians." "We are *checked on a sudden in our ascent towards Heaven*, by some expressions that are more suited to the days of carnal ordinances; the line which the clerk parcels out to us, hath something in it so extremely Jewish and cloudy, that it darkens our view of God the Saviour; some dreadful curse against men is proposed to our lips, which is *so contrary* to the new commandment of loving our enemies." In the Psalms there are "many deficiencies of light and glory."

The language of "T." (Sept. 27, 1853,) is conceived in the same spirit. "*Generally speaking*, the Psalms of David breathe the most fervent spirit of devotion, and that in highly appropriate language. But that can only be said of the inspired original, and said of it with *some explanations*. Could we even use the original, it may well be doubted whether the composition is adapted to our taste, or calculated to animate our feelings of devotion."

Such is a specimen of the language used by the opponents of an inspired Psalmody, when speaking of the Songs of Zion. Very different is the estimate of that collection by the Saviour, and the inspired writers of the New Testament, as shall appear by perusing the *first section* of the *last Chapter* of this work. Very different the estimate of some of the excellent of the earth, from the earliest records of the Christian dispensation. Chrysostem, quoted by McMaster, says:—"The grace of the Holy Ghost hath so ordered it, that the Psalms of David should be recited and sung night and day. In the Church's vigils—in the morning—at funeral solemnities—the first, the midst, and the last, is David. In private houses, where virgins spin—in the monasteries—in the deserts, where men converse with God—the first, the midst, and the last, is David. In the night when men sleep, he wakes them up to sing; and collecting the servants of God into angelic troops, turns earth into heaven, and of men makes angels, chanting David's Psalms."

Surely the judgment of Rev. W. Romaine is entitled to be set against that of Watts. His words are:—"I want a name for

that man who should pretend that he could make better Hymns than the Holy Ghost. His collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and not capable of any improvement. Why, in such a case, would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down and write Hymns for the use of the Church? It is just the same as if he were to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better, that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymnmongers, inadvertently I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the Psalms, to introduce their own verses into the Church, sing them with great delight, and, as they fancy, with great profit; although the whole practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and, therefore, cannot possibly be accompanied with the divine blessing."

"The Psalms of David were penned for the use of the Church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in other ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the Psalmist."—*Edwards*.

"To say that the imprecations in the Psalms are offensive to Christian ears, is talking with a boldness I dare not imitate. Morality is the same now that ever it was; and I cannot think that the Holy Spirit has made that language *divine* in the Old Testament, which is *uncharitable* in the New. We have 'no new commandment,' but what was delivered to us from the beginning."—*Bradbury*.

Notwithstanding the ominous manner in which they have been ushered in, Watts' *Imitation* and *Hymns*, or other poetical compositions manufactured chiefly out of the materials which they supplied, have been very extensively adopted by the Churches. There is reason to believe that multitudes who use them, would strongly dissent from the "many unguarded sentences concerning David and the Book of Psalms," which Dr. W. and others have written; yet it cannot be gainsayed that the introduction of the Songs, without a protest against the defamatory language by which their preparation and introduction have been vindicated, is a virtual homologation of the worst sentence that has been written against David and the Songs of Zion. Though speaking with much diffidence, it is very evident that McMaster ascribes the introduction and spread of Unitarianism to the introduction and general use of Watts' compositions. "It has been said that 'the city of God presented no street of purer gold than the New England Church.' It is now a desolation. It is a fact, not admitting of doubt, that where his compositions were first, and have been longest, used in the Psalmody of the Church, Socinianism has made the most extensive progress. Error has its power as well as truth; and like it, presses to

consistency. Dr. W. rejected the Bible doctrine of the Trinity : he cannot be supposed, intentionally, to contradict his settled principles, in any of his poetic compositions ; his Imitations and Hymns, with all their perfections and imperfections, were adopted in the Psalmody of many churches, to the exclusion of scripture songs ; and among those churches the Socinian heresies have extensively spread.”—“*Apology*,” pp. 121-2.

There is another doctrine, usually bound up in some form with Socinianism and its kindred heresies, which has followed in the wake of Dr. W.—*Universalism*. It is not necessary to mark the relation, which the progress of Universalism bears to the use of uninspired Songs. From the reasons assigned for the exclusion of *some* of David’s Psalms, it is easy to shew that Universalism might be *expected* to follow. If it be not consistent with the spirit of Christ, to pray for the destruction of ungodly men, under any supposition, it must be inconsistent with the character of God, to which pure religion constitutes an assimilation, to grant the petition ; and what God may not grant to the prayers of his people, he cannot in justice execute. Thus, by a very simple process, we arrive at the conclusion, that the ultimate destruction of any member of the human family is at variance with the divine character.

Among evangelical expositors of the Word, there is manifested, both in the pulpit and by the press, an unwarrantable squeamishness, when they approach the portions that are presented to us in the form of prayers against the enemies of God, and of his people as such. They have strengthened the hands of the enemies of scriptural views of the divine attributes, and of the integrity of the divine word, by shrinking from the recognition of those prayers, and by discussing the subject, as if they had a lurking apprehension of their indefensibility upon Christian principles. They usually treat them as predictions, not as prayers. Even if we allow that the Hebrew might be translated as predictions, it must not be forgotten that when the Apostles quote such passages as contain the supposed predictions, they present them still in the imprecatory form.

Were the propriety of substituting the prediction for the prayer admitted, the difficulty is only removed a single step. What would be thought of the servant of Christ, who hesitates to acquiesce in the purpose which his Master has expressed, or to say *Amen* to the sentence he has pronounced ? And what is the expression of acquiescence in the prediction which God has uttered, but a prayer for its accomplishment ? The petition of the Lord’s prayer, “Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven,” implies all that is expressed in all the imprecations contained in the Book of Psalms. Are men to boast of a mercy more comprehensive than God’s ? If we are made partakers of

the divine nature, and assimilated to God, our mercy can no more involve a want of due respect for justice than can God's mercy; and we shall repudiate the mercy that does not harmonise with truth, and the peace that shrinks from the embrace of righteousness. A most unequivocal inconsistency is often found entering into the prayers of men—of distinguished men—who, knowing that we look for what we ask, and pray for nothing but what we may hope to obtain, preach or defend the eternal misery of some men, and follow up their sermon or argument by asking God to save all men: knowing that the time shall come when the watchmen of Zion shall see with one eye, preach the duty of speaking the same things, and, instead of praying for Christians of all denominations, pray for all denominations of Christians, the answer to which would involve the perpetuity of disagreement and division. In a word, they ask for what they know they cannot obtain—for what they do not wish to obtain. As God had determined that Moses should not enter the promised land, he peremptorily forbids him to express a desire upon the subject. This absurd display of charity reminds us of the demand made upon Christians of an impossibility—of more than everlasting love ever does—of the forgiveness of those who neither profess nor manifest repentance for the injury they have done: of the prohibition of anger when God is angry, and the complacent recognition of a christian spirit in those who would stab their neighbor under the fifth rib, provided it be done with a placid countenance, and an "Art thou in health, my brother?"

In this the meekness and lowliness of Christ are illustrated, and he is set forth for an example to the "man, who for conscience towards God, endures grief, suffering wrongfully," that "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." But an untaught and unsanctified devotionism—an alien from the place of holiness—would not only forbid the Christian to avenge himself, but to commit his cause to God, and ask the interposition of him to whom vengeance belongs. The spirit of David is better than the spirit of Watts. The spirit that moved the Psalmist was the spirit of Christ, but Watts' preface was written under the influence of a very different spirit; and those who talk of the "cursing Psalms," talk impiously, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

The Church has been a loser by the exclusion of these same "cursing Psalms" from the sanctuary of praise. When the Lord teaches us to pray for forgiveness, *as we forgive*, the very form of the prayer is adapted to turn our thoughts in upon ourselves, and to lead us to ask, "Are we praying for forgiveness or condemnation?" For if we do not unreservedly forgive our repent-

ant brother, we are praying, in the words which our Lord teaches us to use, for condemnation. And when, in our approach to the altar of God, we record his abhorrence of sin, and pray for his interposition against the counsels and operations of ungodly men, we are impressed more deeply with the exceeding sinfulness of sin, God's determination to punish it, and learn to tremble at the possibility of occupying the position, or cultivating the fellowship of those against whom the whole church lifts up her voice—against whom *we* cry to God. Exclude the "cursing Psalms," and error, profanity, and impiety, shall acquire a daring boldness, that even ungodly men will dread to exhibit, when the thunders of Sinai are echoing through the aisles of our churches, pressing the present necessity to escape for their lives, and seek safety in the Hiding place that God has provided.

Where are impiety and infidelity most rampant? Where are youth most fearlessly profane? Search and look. I hesitate not to suggest the answer. "Where David is excluded from the sanctuary, and the still small voice is dissociated from the fire, the earthquake, and the strong wind which rends the mountains."

NOTE F.—Page 61.

Claims of Songs, not incorporated with the Book of Psalms.

Besides independent compositions, proceeding from the pen of inspired writers, such as the natural history of Solomon, all which have perished, there are historical remains, of a poetical character, some composed by inspired writers, others by individuals of recognised piety, but not numbered with the writers of the oracles of God. With respect to such of these compositions as are not incorporated with the Book of Psalms, there are two questions that may arise—Are they inspired? Are they adapted for general use, or do they proceed upon circumstances of a local and an evanescent character? It does not follow from their insertion in Scripture, that they are inspired. An author is not responsible for every sentence he transcribes, except its transcription has its origin in his approbation of it. To use the words of Haldane in reply to a silly objection to verbal inspiration—"Is it not sufficiently plain, that, while God dictated to the sacred penman the words of those referred to (Job's friends and the Devil,) he dictated them to be inserted, not as *his* words but as *their* words?" The insertion of a saying or of a song, by an inspired writer, gives us assurance that we have a faithful record of that saying, or copy of that song. We must ascertain, by its consistency with the word of inspiration,

whether it can be admitted as correct, and by other circumstances whether it can be recognised as inspired. Who would say that David wrote his pathetic lamentation on the death of Saul and Jonathan, which he calls "The Bow," under the influence of the spirit of inspiration? or that by the same spirit he composed the dirge which was pronounced over Abner's grave? I should not undertake to defend the inspiration of the Song of Deborah and Barak, neither that of Hannah, more than the inspiration of the best of the Olney Hymns, or of Erskine's Gospel Sonnets; though approving not only every sentiment, but every expression. Good men may present us with an exposition of the Divine word in poetry as well as in prose. Good men may have composed songs, and sung them, who had just as little idea of introducing their songs into the services of the Church, as those who have sung the songs of Burns, or Tannahill. The following remarks appear to me very judicious:—"Uninspired songs were doubtless used by the Hebrews on special" (perhaps ordinary) "occasions; but would they have thought of bringing them into the temple of God, or into their synagogues, when engaged in His solemn worship, after receiving from God the command to praise him in the words of David and Asaph the seer? But admitting that such Hymns were used by these persons in the formal worship of God, it remains to be proved that in doing so they pretended to assert a divine warrant for what they did. They perhaps entertained views somewhat loose in regard to Christians regulating their worship by the will and word of Christ. We know that there is not that regard paid to this matter by many professing Protestants, which one would reasonably expect."—" *Friends of Inspired Psalmody Defended*," by Cooper, *Pha.*, 1850, p. 12.

Granting the inspiration of the Song, which Moses and the children of Israel sung, when they had escaped from the hands of Pharaoh; and of the Song which Moses taught the children of Israel before his death, we have no evidence that the former was ever sung afterwards, except as the sentiments are, or as in some instances, the language is incorporated with the Book of Psalms: and it is evident that the latter was designed for the use of Israel, as a nation that might be, and actually has been, deprived of the distinguishing privileges that belong to the Covenant Society which God recognises as his people—an indestructible society.

NOTE G.—Page 69.

The Principle involved in Watts' Imitation.

The title-page of Watts' Psalms is calculated to leave the impression, that the reader has the Psalms of David before him.

The admirers of Dr. Watts are fond of representing his work as a revision, "a rich and beautiful version of the Psalms." There is a want of honesty in the manner in which the Book of Psalms has been treated, to which we would not submit in any department of science. It might be rash to make the statement, but there is room to suspect that the ease with which the churches submitted to the course pursued by Dr. Watts, has emboldened others to treat the most valuable religious publications of our most esteemed authors in a similar manner. The American Tract Society has perpetrated a virtual fraud upon the public, and an act of flagrant injustice to the authors, by sowing broadcast the works of various devoted servants of Christ, divested of the distinctive character that entitles them to bear the names of the writers upon the title-page. Nor is it a sufficient exculpation to insert a brief note, in very small type, on a page usually devoted to a notice of entry in "the Clerk's Office of the District Court," (at which the reader hardly thinks worth his while to look) which does not prepare the purchaser for the serious alterations that are made. We are furnished with "Glass's Abridgment of Hall's Contemplations," with the following notice printed in the shade: "In this edition a few passages *implying denominational peculiarities*, have been omitted." In "Baxter's Call," "a few lines touching points on which Evangelical Christians differ are omitted." When such works are filed down so as to be equally accommodated to the standard of six different denominations, there is little left that might not be as well ascribed to a dozen, as to the writers of the original. We are not disposed now to discuss the question, whether the works so modified are not better adapted to general utility, but to deny the right of any man, or society of men, to send them forth, after being subjected to mutilation, recommended by the names of men, strangers to the taste which demands the mutilation. We would see Hall, and Edwards, and Flavel, as they *were*, not as the A. T. S. think they *should have been*.

That Dr. W. has led the way in the literary injustice, hear the words of Dr. George Jenkin, of the O. S. Presbyterian Assembly, of course no prejudiced judge. "Dr. W. has attempted, professedly, to *improve* upon the sentiment, the very matter, and the order, by various omissions and additions, to fit the Psalms for christian worship. This is unfair. If Pope had taken the same license with the Poems of Homer, all the amateurs of Greek poetry in the world would have cried, Shame on the presumptuous intruder. But it is a pious and zealous Christian divine who has taken this liberty with the Songs of Zion, and almost the whole church acquiesce in it. What would we think of a French poet, who, proposing to enrich French literature with a versification of the masterpiece of the English muse, should mangle and transpose the torn limbs of Paradise Lost,

until Milton himself might meet his first-born on the highway, and not recognise it? And must this literary butchery be tolerated, because, forsooth, the victim is the inspired Psalmist? Why should the heaven-taught bard be misrepresented thus? Let us rather have the songs of inspiration as God inspired them, and as nearly as is possible, and consistent with the laws of English versification. God's *order* of thought is doubtless best for his church. If any one thinks he can write better spiritual songs than the sweet singer of Israel, let him do it: but let him not dress the savoury meat which God has prepared, until all its substance and savour are gone, and then present it to us as an imitation of David's Psalms."

The professed object of Dr. W. is to "fit the Psalms for Christian worship." If we allow that the changes he has introduced, render the Psalms more suitable to the New Testament dispensation, he has entirely forgotten the universal spread of Christianity. He has given a very circumscribed locality to the Christian worship for which he would make provision; and Christian would be set against Christian in the use of *his songs*. One verse from Psalm 20th "for a day of prayer in time of war," runs thus:—

O may the mem'ry of thy name
Inspire our armies for the fight!
Our foes shall fall and die with shame,
Or quit the field with shameful flight.

Another from the 60th Psalm, for "a day of humiliation for disappointment in war:—

Go with our armies to the fight,
Like a confederate God:
In vain confederate pow'rs unite
Against thy lifted rod.

Now imagine Christian nations at war, as has often been unhappily the case. American and Briton, French and Russian, lift up their voices and present their song to the Eternal, involving a palpable contradiction in their requests. To this Dr. McMaster adverts in the following terms:—"The Psalms, such of them, at least, as he thought worthy of imitation, must be made to speak a language which, according to the *reformer* of David, the Holy Ghost did not make them speak. Still, however, *reformed* as David was, he was unfit for the sanctuaries of America. The imitation and hymns of Dr. W. were adapted to the British monarchy; America had become both independent and republican. The reformer must be reformed. Those compositions which superceded the hymns of inspiration, must be adapted to the Christian worship in the United States."

In the Psalms, Israel is introduced as the covenant people of God; their privileges, trials, deliverances, and triumphs, are those of the Church in every age, in every place. Dr. W. has exhibited Britain as the promised land, (*Ps.* 67); the people as

the peculiar inheritance of God, (*Pss.* 60, 147); her wars are confounded with those waged according to the express command of God (*Ps.* 18, *common metre*); and her king is identified with him whom God has set upon his holy hill of Zion (*Pss.* 18, 75.) A more gross, more ignorant, and more impious perversion could not easily be introduced than what is involved in the substitution of the name, the people, the sovereign, the wars, the victories, of any land, for those of Israel in the Book of Psalms.

NOTE H.—Page 71.

Comparison of Liturgies of Prayer and Praise.

An argument is urged against our limitation to one form, though that is an inspired form, of praise, derived from the supposed necessity of a form of prayer, upon the same principle on which a liturgy of praise is vindicated. The late judicious Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, has stated this argument, as strongly perhaps as it could be stated, and in his usual lucid terms. But it is not a little extraordinary in one, whose very valuable works show that he was accustomed to examine every subject which he discussed, very coolly and impartially, to find him employ language implying an imputation of such a lack of discrimination, on the part of the advocates of the exclusive use of an inspired Psalmody, as to deprive them of any title to have their reasons canvassed, or to cut off all hope that they may be found able to weigh an argument on the contrary part. Indeed, he speaks, as if he considered the subject too transparent to warrant an argument at all. His words are:—"Who can forbear to marvel, then, when the light, the freedom, and the spirituality of prayer, have received such manifest and rich improvement under the New Testament dispensation, that there should be any who, in regard to forms of *praise*, should insist that we are bound still to adhere to the Psalmody of the old economy? What would be thought of any one who, in preaching and in prayer, should contend that we are not warranted to advance beyond the restricted limits of the ceremonial economy? Why is it not equally wonderful that any, claiming to be eminently evangelical, should occupy this ground, with regard to praise."—*Public Prayer*, p. 38.

Similar is the style of Dr. Neill, in his exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians. "That Hymns or Spiritual Songs, bot-tomed on the word of God, whether a versified exposition of a particular passage, or a condensed exhibition of gospel truth, taken from various passages, and clothed in decent and serious language, may be sung in divine worship, whether public or private, appears to me perfectly obvious and incontestible. Yet it is a curious fact, that many Christian congregations, and some, too, in our own connection, have conscientious scruples on this

subject." To Dr. Neill, an able reply has been furnished by Rev. Joseph T. Cooper, Ass. Presbyn. Pha., entitled, "The Friends of an Inspired Psalmody defended,"—a reply deserving a careful perusal by both the friends and enemies of the cause he advocates.

"T" says, "It would be absurd to hold the lawfulness of extempore prayer and deny the other." (*I suppose he means the use of uninspired hymns in worship.*)

One circumstance seems to be entirely overlooked in this reasoning, if reasoning it can be called, that extemporaneous prayer is not to be paralleled with all hymns of human composition, but such as shall be prepared at the time of announcement, and verse by verse as the composure is being sung. A form of praise is absolutely necessary. There can be no social praise without a form, and a form previously known. Even the *individual* who would praise God in a song must use one previously prepared either by another or by himself. The attempt at an extemporaneous effusion, or such as might be compared with extemporaneous prayer, would very likely astonish, or disgust, the most fervent admirers of Rouse's worst lines. The case in respect to prayer is different, in which one is the organ of many, and the mental or expressed assent of those who join, follows the utterance of the several petitions, or of the prayer as a whole. This is fully established by an incidental expression used by the Apostle when speaking to a different point of Christian practice—"How shall he that occupieth the place of the unlearned, say *Amen*, at thy giving of thanks?" But as the reply to this reasoning, against an inspired and of course a fixed form of praise, is well expressed by McMaster and Martin, I prefer placing their words before the reader. "Had we a large and diversified collection of prayers in the sacred volume, bearing this inscription, THE BOOK OF PRAYERS, and no express authority for using others, few, it is presumed, would ever attempt extemporaneous prayer. When our Lord, at the request of his disciples, taught them to pray, he merely set them a pattern, saying, 'after this manner pray ye.' But there is not the least intimation in the whole compass of divine revelation, that the Book of Psalms was given as a model, after which we should shape Psalms for ourselves. Let it also be recollected that the Psalms, though composed by different individuals, on different occasions, and at different times, were, by the authority of God, collected together into one book; the case however is different in relation to the Scripture prayers; excepting such as are also Psalms, they lie scattered throughout the sacred volume, being recorded in the order of time in which they were delivered." Martin's Pref., pp. 9, 10:—"Prayer and praise are distinct ordinances. We can have social prayer without a prescribed form, but not social singing of praise. Again, God has not seen meet

to appoint, at any time, for the stated use of his church, a book of prayers; but he has given an inspired book of *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. And, lastly, observe, that the Lord has promised his Spirit, as the spirit of supplications, to help the infirmities of his sanctified ones, who neither know how to pray, nor for what to pray, as they ought; but on the page of inspiration there is no promise of aid from the Spirit, in the composition of a Book of Hymns, for the public service of his Church. This seems to intimate, that to such a work he proposed not to call any of her sons.—*McMaster's Apology*, pp. 149, 150.

NOTE K.—Page 85.

Hymns and Spiritual Songs.

In addition to the remarks contained in the text, in support of the position, that the Hymns and Spiritual Songs spoken of by the Apostle, are not other odes than are comprehended in the Book of Psalms, we observe, (first), that if they are not, the direction of James, "Is any merry? let him sing Psalms," limits the Christians, to whom he writes, in a manner not sanctioned by the Apostle of the Gentiles. (Second.) We find the term *spiritual* uniformly used in Scripture to denote that which proceeds immediately from the Spirit of Christ, and we thus learn that the Spiritual Song is the fruit of inspiration. Let the reader, who desires satisfaction upon this point, examine carefully those passages, in which mention is made of *spiritual* men, *spiritual* gifts, *spiritual* meat, *spiritual* drink, a *spiritual* rock, a *spiritual* law, a *spiritual* body, and a *spiritual* house. (Third.) These Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, in common, constitute "the word of Christ." That the Colossians may teach and admonish one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, the *word of Christ* must dwell in them richly in all wisdom and knowledge; and the Ephesians must be filled with the Spirit, as opposed to wine, if they would speak to themselves in Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual Songs.

I am aware that the punctuation, in both of the passages referred to above, has been judged faulty; and it is supposed that the use of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, should be exhibited in connection with singing only. So thought I formerly. Except when the Psalms contain a direct address to God, we ask, to whom do Christians speak, in singing praise? and unless we view the service as a mere form, the answer must be, The worshippers are speaking, whether the Psalm be didactic or hortatory, to one another; while music is adapted to fix the attention, and deepen the impression which the language is intended to produce. In no other form, can Christians in their assemblies, exhort or teach one another, unless many worship-

pers are absolved from the obligation, or the house of God is turned into such a Babel, as to destroy all hope of edification from the exercise. In this form, the weakest can edify his fellow, and perform a duty otherwise impossible. If Psalmody were generally understood and appreciated, and used in its proper spirit, we should have the *word of Christ* addressed to Christians by one another, instead of the wild, and incoherent, and senseless addresses, which are often uttered under the name of *exhortation*. (Fourth.) That a *prophet* is one who speaks under the immediate direction of God, will hardly be questioned. The idea to be attached to the *word* is well illustrated in the address of God to Moses (Ex. vii. 1): "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy *prophet*." Aaron should receive instructions immediately from Moses, and speak accordingly to the King of Egypt. A prophet, therefore, or a prophet of the Lord, is one who speaks as he receives instructions from God. *Prophesying* is accordingly the utterance of words taught by the Holy Spirit, whether these revelations have respect to things past, present, or future. The celebration of praise is denominated *propheying*. The right of women, who are forbidden to assume the character of public teachers, to prophesy, is fully recognised by Paul (1 Cor. xi. 5). That *propheying* has reference, in this instance, to praise, will be manifest, by comparing the words of the Apostle with the statement that the sons of Asaph *prophesied* with *harps*, with *psalteries*, and with *cymbals* (1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2); and those passages where a *company* of prophets is represented as exercising their office. The conclusion to which these premises lead is this, that in the celebration of praise, we use the words of inspiration. *Praise* is not otherwise *Propheying*.

The judgment that Hymns and Spiritual Songs are nothing different from the Book of Psalms—are not uninspired compositions—is sustained by the most distinguished names. True, the most eminent are not authority; but when one man exhibits his opinion, instead of argument, we may oppose name to name. And the advocates of an uninspired Psalmody can produce no names superior, few, if any equal, to the names of Calvin, Beza, Owen, Manton, Poole, Vincent, Calamy, Ridgely, Gill, and many others, who all proclaim that the Psalms of David are intended by the terms which the Apostle uses.

The advocates of the exclusive use of David's Psalms never thought of excluding Hymns and Spiritual Songs from the services of the Church.

I suppose to the language of Paul "T." refers, when (Sept. 3, 1853) he says that "the first Christians did this, (he probably means, sang uninspired hymns,) with the approbation of the Apostles."

While I am writing these Notes, the person, who is supposed

to have subscribed himself "T." has departed this life. But "T." represents a class: any one, who thinks he can wear it, may take up the mantle, and smite the waters. If they are divided, we shall hold ourselves bound to recognise the succession.

NOTE L.—Page 104.

Imperfections of Human Compositions.

There are many repetitions in the Divine Word, but not one of them is *vain*. If the same thing is once and again introduced, whether by the same or several inspired writers, it is presented under a different aspect, or in a different connexion: and the result is, to give the diligent student a more exact and comprehensive view of the whole subject brought before his mind. The matter, which, at one time, is treated in a didactic form, is exhibited again, in the historical portions of the Scripture, as embodied in the life of faith, and we recognise "the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men," in the living pages of the believer's conversation. Again, the same things are brought forward in a form, adapted to the devotional exercises of the saints, and appear in their transforming influence upon the soul, giving forth their utterance in the language of praise. Thus God has made a revelation of the system of grace, the provisions and results of the Covenant of Redemption, in a three fold form—didactic, historical, and devotional; and what the Holy Ghost directly teaches, in language suited to the glorious theme, he leads every saint to express, by showing forth the lesson written upon his heart, and to exhibit in a conversation becoming the gospel. The Psalms are a revelation of the will and way of God, made *in the man*, and poured from the lips in the language of inspiration. Every saint, in the use of Zion's songs, becomes (to revert to a thought introduced in the last note) a prophet of God, exercising his proper functions. We never find God directly addressing man in the Book of Psalms, but every saint speaking to God and gratefully acknowledging what God has done, or what he humbly desires God to do for him; or speaking to his fellow, and shewing what God has done for him, and what God requires all his people to think, to say, to execute.

If it be a fanciful idea, that the Psalms are a perfect copy of the revealed will of God, in a special form, it is one that has occurred to the most enlightened of the followers of the Lamb. Of the Book, which Luther called his "little Bible," others hold similar language. "I believe that a man can find nothing more glorious than these Psalms; for they embrace the whole life of man, the affections of his mind, and the emotions of his soul. If he discovers that he grows in holiness, or desires to praise and

glorify God, he can select a Psalm suited to every occasion, and thus will find that they are written *for him*.”—*Athanasius*. “Here is a perfect theology, or system of divine knowledge. There are treasures of all things brought into and laid up in the Book of Psalms, as in a great and common store-house or magazine.”—*Basil*. “It was but a just encomium of it (the Book of Psalms,) that came from the pen of one of the early fathers, that it is a complete system of divinity, for the use and edification of the common people of the Christian Church.”—*Horsely*. “The Psalms are an epitome of the Bible.”—*Bp. Horne*. “There is nothing in true religion, doctrinal, experimental, and practical, but will present itself to our attention, whilst we meditate upon the Psalms. The Christian’s use of them in the closet, and the minister’s in the pulpit, will generally increase, with the growing experience of the power of true religion in their own hearts.”—*Scott*. “A moment’s thought will shew, that the Book of Psalms is ‘the Bible in miniature;’ precisely what an evangelical psalm-book should be, that is, a compressed exhibition of Jehovah’s character, grace, and providence; of man’s state, experience, and prospects.”—*McMaster*.

The question may be asked, how Christians came to form a judgment of the Book of Psalms so unfavourable, how to acquiesce in the libel of Watts against them, and to set them aside to make way for his poetical effusions? McMaster explains the circumstance thus:—“The days of Puritanical zeal had passed away. The licentious and unprincipled reigns of the second Charles and James, had given a shock to the morals and to the piety of the nation, under the influence of which they languished, and were ready to expire. The principles of infidelity had extended to every department of the social body. At such a time, it is not strange, that an indulgent ear should be given to unhallowed suggestions, against any portion of the word of God; and especially, when recommended by the imposing pretensions of superior liberality.”

The writer of an article in the *Free Church Magazine*, on the “Paraphrases,” explains, upon a similar principle, the alteration of forty-five, and the addition of twenty-two, which together constitute the collection of Paraphrases used by the Established Church of Scotland, and by others. Of the alterations made upon the older Paraphrases, and appearing in the existing collection, the writer says:—“Our impression is, that their alteration was one of the indices, which the times abounded in, of a determination to bury evangelical truth.” Of the added Paraphrases:—“Somewhere among these twenty-two, and the five Hymns, will be found, almost exclusively, the portions of Paraphrases, against which the greatest exception has been taken by serious persons.” Now for the state of things, in the Church, when the Paraphrases, as they now stand, were sanc-

tioned:—"The readers of this magazine need not be reminded of the rapidity of the declension which followed the deposition of the seceding ministers in 1740. The faithful remnant in the Church were dispirited and enfeebled; their protestations were unheeded; their numbers diminished; forced settlements, unfaithful discipline, false doctrine, and all that betokens the withdrawal of the Spirit of God, multiplied and grew; until, at the time we speak of, Moderatism had reached the highest pinnacle of power, and the rights and liberties of Christ's Church and people were contemptuously trodden under foot."

The "Hymn-Book of the United Presbyterian Church" has been preceded by no equivocal evidence, that the spirit of the Erskines, and, in part, their principles, have passed away: and if future developments do not discover that the way was prepared for the "Hymn Book," as it had been prepared for Watts' Imitation and the Paraphrases, there must be some error in the reasoning of this production.

Are the Hymns and Spiritual Songs, that, coming in like a flood, have swept away David's Psalms, except on a few elevated headlands, which rise above the inundation, distinguished by an elegance, a spirituality, a comprehensiveness, in a word, a perfection that ought to reconcile us to the substitution? We invite the reader to consult, not the bigotted advocates of the *Old Psalms*, not the vulgar advocates of Rouse's *doggerel*, but the liberal and enlightened introducers and supporters of uninspired compositions, to the exclusion of the Psalms of David. Are they satisfied? The numerous changes, substitutions, omissions, additions, that follow each other in rapid succession, furnish a sufficient answer. Blaikie's "Philosophy of Sectarianism" furnishes the three following quotations:—

A "Layman" in the *New York Independent*, Feb. 23, 1854, says—"We have some two thousand pieces, which are called Psalms, or Hymns. Perhaps two hundred of them may pass for odes or lyrics, suitable for singing. Fifty more might possibly be selected by an expert."

The *Boston Congregationalist*, Feb. 15, 1853, has the following:—"Professor B. B. Edwards believed that two or three hundred Psalms or Hymns would include all which are of sterling value for the sanctuary. Unquestionably he was right. The popular demand for new and more numerous Hymns, it cannot be denied, arises in part from the wide dissatisfaction, with a large number of those with which our hymn-books are filled. Let us have fewer and choicer. Let them be truly sacred lyrics, and not feeble prose, measured and amputated to the proper length, and afterwards still further mangled, at the mercy of men who wonder that David" (or rather the Holy Ghost, who spake by him) "had not sufficient native sense to have composed his Psalms in proper metres, ready at once

to be cantered through 'De Fleury, or paced through State Street.'"

The *Glasgow Examiner* for Sept. 18, 1852, thus remarks upon the "Hymn Book of the U. P. Church. The collection contains a great many beautiful effusions of sanctified genius, and not a few *very trashy productions*. We feel very sensitive on the score of Hymn Books; and while we admit that hymns may be occasionally used, we decidedly protest against the superceding the productions of the sweet singer of Israel. The U. P. Church has taken an important step in making a hymn book under the sanction of its highest court, and other bodies would do well to pause before following this example."

A defect that must attach to all Hymn Books, and to which we have alluded in the text, is here exhibited in the words of Cooper. They embody sectarianism, and are calculated to perpetuate disunion. "From the necessities of the case, the hymns of all churches must bear, to a greater or less degree, a denominational impress. Hence we have Methodist hymns, Baptist hymns, Presbyterian hymns, and even Universalist hymns, and we may reasonably expect that these various hymns will exhibit the peculiarities of the Churches, by which they have been respectively adopted. Lest it might be thought that we are biassed by prejudice on this subject, we shall quote the words of the editors of the 'Biblical Repertory, or Princeton Review,' who no doubt make use of an uninspired Psalmody. On page 505 of vol. 18, may be found the following remarks:—'The Psalmody of the Christian assembly has generally partaken largely of those characteristics of thought and expression, which arise from the circumstances of the people. In a divided state of the Church, when the different denominations are zealous for their respective forms of doctrine and worship, the lyric poetry becomes strongly argumentative and polemical; addresses men rather than God; and is employed to defend and inculcate theology, and to confirm the attachment of the people to their peculiar articles of faith. Hence each sect has its Psalmody. Both policy and conscience are deemed to require the hymns to coincide in sentiment throughout with the creed of the sect. And these doctrines are not only stated in poetical language, or language professedly poetical, and dwelt upon in a strain of devout meditation, but are frequently inculcated in a sort of metrical argument, and appeal to persons not supposed to believe them.'"

NOTE M.—Page 105.

Merits of Rouse's Version.

The opponents of an inspired Psalmody, or advocates of an uninspired Psalmody, frequently complicate the investigation,

by mixing up the question of different versions with that of the claims of David's Psalms. Apparently with a design of exciting the prejudice of the reader or hearer, the language that is used is adapted to leave the impression, that a correct or bearable version of the Book of Psalms we cannot have, and that the one in common use is such, as cannot but produce an utter disgust with the substance because of the form. Dr. Neill says that "the miserable doggerel of Rouse is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers, or the charms of music." The judgment of "T." is that "Roos's version of the Psalms was never one of the best, and is now out of date. There are some good passages in our metrical version of the Psalms of David, but the greater part of them borders on the doggerel, and many passages are doggerel in the extreme."

Dr. Neill evidently felt that he was addressing a very facile audience, and did not expect to have either his ideas or terms exactly canvassed; while "T." proceeds like one who is determined, by a bold statement, to deter any one from calling it in question. Both agree, and agree with many others besides, in applying to Rouse's or Roos's version, wholly or partially, that every way harsh word *doggerel*. It may not be clearly understood by all their readers, but is likely to make the deeper impression by being hard sounding, though conveying no definite idea. In treating of a polemical subject, I once used the word *duplicity*. One of my hearers, giving to a friend an account of the discourse, mentioned the term, and confessed he did not understand it, but he felt assured that the severest *cut* of all lay in that same word *duplicity*.

Still, Rouse has so many friends, among the pious, the learned, and even among poets and musicians, that we run no risk of being hooted out of good company, for professing a strong partiality for his doggerel: and the man had better conceal his real name, who ventures to say, "Roos's version never was one of the best." Poetry, real, heart-stirring poetry, has so little to do either with Rhythm or Rhyme, that, since whatever poetry there is in David, there is in Rouse, Neill and "T." would be classed by Dr. Blair (no mean judge of composition, prosaic or poetical), with those "frivolous writers, always disposed to squabble concerning the minutiae of criticism, which deserve not any particular discussion." When we are furnished with a better version than that of Rouse (which is barely among the things possible), we are prepared to accept it. In the mean time, we shall show what others have thought of Roos: others who are entitled to express an opinion upon such a subject; men who "had taste for good poetry and good music," and in whose presence, "T." and company would not display an excess of modesty by their silence.

Owen, Manton, Poole, and twenty-three others. "The translation which is now put in thy hand, cometh nearest to the original of any that we have seen, and runneth with such a fluent sweetness, that we thought fit to recommend it for thy Christian acceptance; some of us having used it already, with great comfort and satisfaction."

Boswell, "Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossessions. But at a mature period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms, I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland, is, upon the whole, the best, and that it is *in vain to think of having a better*. It has in general a simplicity, and unction of sacred poesy; and in many parts its transfusion is admirable."

Romaine. "You may find fault with the manner of eking out a verse for the sake of the rhyme, but what of that? Here is every thing great and noble, although not in Dr. Watts' way or style. It is not like his fine sound and florid verse; as good old Mr. Hall used to call it, *Watts' jingle*. I do not match those Psalms with what is now admired in poetry; although the time was when no less a man than the Rev. T. Bradbury, in his sober judgment, thought so meanly of Watts' hymns, as commonly to call them *Watts' whymns*."

Dr. George Burns, late of St. John, N. B. "The translation was made by a very distinguished Hebrew scholar, Francis Rouse, Esq., M. P., one of Cromwell's counsellors of state, and preferred, on account of his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages, to the Provostship of Eton School. His translation underwent various corrections, by a committee of the General Assembly. In many instances, the versification is far from being smooth, or agreeable to the ear. The fact is, a *literal* was more an object of attention, than an elegant translation, and we have the satisfaction to know, that we utter praise in the very words of inspiration. It is the best and most exact we have to put into the hands of the common people."

McCheyne. "The metrical version of the Psalms should be read or sung through, at least once in the year. It is truly an admirable translation from the Hebrew, and is frequently more correct than the prose version."

Sir Walter Scott. "The expression of the old metrical translation, though homely, is plain, forcible, and intelligible, and very often possesses a rude sort of majesty, which perhaps would be ill exchanged for mere elegance. I have an old fashioned taste in sacred as well as profane poetry: I cannot help preferring even Sternhold and Hopkins to Tate and Brady, and our own metrical version of the Psalms to both. I hope, therefore, they will be touched with a lenient hand."

NOTE N.—Page 127.

Mode of Singing.

When we approach the altar of God, attention is due to the form, as well as the matter, of every ordinance. To this rule the celebration of praise does not constitute an exception.

We have no evidence of the formal institution of instrumental music, before the time of David. It would seem to have been ordered, preparatory to the service of the Temple to be erected in the reign of his successor (as God gave to David the pattern of the structure and its furniture), and with the service of the Temple to have passed away. It never was recognised as a part of the synagogue service, after the order of which Christian churches were regulated. Our Lord, with his disciples, celebrated praise in a song, and the primitive Christians sung praise by his authority. Yet in all the minute instructions furnished by Paul, on the subject of the public service, there is not one word that implies the use, or authority to use, instruments under this dispensation. It is not improbable that, as circumcision was observed after the day of Pentecost, in conformity with one of the most excusable prejudices—that founded on a previous divine institution,—so instrumental music may have found a plea upon the same principle: but Romaine informs us that “in the time of Justin Martyr, instrumental music was abolished; and he highly commends singing with the voice, because Psalms, with organs and cymbals, are fitter to please children than to instruct the church.” In Hall’s “Gospel Worship,” the following occurs: “The use of musical instruments in the worship of God, is but a modern innovation. Their warmest advocates cannot pretend to find them (revived) in the Christian church, before the year 660. And Thomas Aquinas, who lived about the year 1250, says, ‘the church does not use musical instruments to praise God, lest she should seem to judaize.’ Upon which place Cardinal Cajitan gives us this natural comment: ‘It is to be observed, the Church did not use instruments in T. Aquinas’ time: whence, even to this day, the Church of Rome does not use them in the Pope’s presence.’ And we have as severe a censure passed upon such instruments, when they are employed in this part of the divine service, in the homilies of the Church of England, as ever was passed upon them, perhaps, by any writer whatever. A fact which took place at the Reformation, is recorded and improved in these words: ‘A woman said to her neighbor, Alas, gossip, what shall we do at Church, since all the saints are taken away; since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone; since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the organs, that we could before? But, dearly beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice and give thanks to God

that our churches are delivered out of all those things, which displeased God so sore, and filthily defiled his holy place, and his house of prayer.'” In Jennings’s “Jewish Antiquities,” we read: “It (instrumental music) is retained in the Lutheran Church, contrary to the opinion of Luther, who, as Eckard confesses, reckoned organs among the ensigns of Baal. Organs are still used in some of the Dutch churches, but against the minds of their pastors; for in the National Synod, at Middleburg, *Anno* 1581, and in that of Holland and Zeeland, *Anno* 1594, it was resolved that they should endeavour to obtain of the magistrates, the laying aside of organs, and the singing with them in churches. I only add, that the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, is mentioned among the glories of mystical Babylon, ‘that mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, whom the Lord will destroy with the sword of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.’”

Closely allied to the organ, either as antecedent or consequent, is the choir, of which the Rev. J. A. James says: “An organ renders the congregation independent of that most sensitive, and, in many cases, most troublesome and unmanageable of all classes of functionaries—a choir. Singing seats, as they are called, are more commonly the scenes of discord than any other part of the chapel; and indeed it is revolting to every pious feeling, to see sometimes what characters, and to hear what music, are found in these high places of the sanctuary.” In equally strong terms, Dr. McMaster expresses himself: “One very general practice cannot be reprobated in terms too strong, that of an entire congregation, say of one thousand or fifteen hundred persons, resigning the *whole* of this part of worship (singing) to a dozen or two, usually of the most trifling characters: for the choir demands no qualification, but a well-tuned voice. And this *farce* is countenanced by ministers of religion; this *outrage* on devotion, and *insult* against the God of Heaven, is called religious worship.”

From choir singing other evils necessarily spring: some of which are set forth in an article signed “Many Brethren,” in the *Christian Observer*, Pha., from which the following sentences are copied. “It cannot be denied, that within a few years, the secularising of this part of the public services of the sanctuary, has made rapid advances, especially in this and other large cities and towns; and the evil has become so great, that not a few of the middle-aged and senior members of the churches doubt whether there is any worship in it. That opera music is played and sung in a number of *evangelical* churches, is notorious. During the past winter, large congregations assembled every Sabbath evening (chiefly young persons), for several weeks, at one of our fashionably located metropolitan churches, where the great attraction was the fine *opera music*, executed

by the organist and choir, in the most *artistic style*, in sacred words. Recently, at a Sabbath evening service, in one of our largest *orthodox* churches, a distinguished clergyman from a distance preached. He opened the service by reading a very solemn and appropriate hymn; but the choir, consisting of three professional singers, proceeded to perform an anthem, in fancy style, much to the surprise of the congregation. In the villages of New England, the evil prevails—the same in kind, differing in degree. There, during the summer, the writer attended, for some weeks, two evangelical Congregational churches, where, in the music, every thing was sacrificed to effect. The airs were well adapted to drive away all serious thoughts.”

Do such evils exist? Can they grow to such magnitude, except where human compositions have displaced inspired songs?

The voice of nature, the voice of God, directs to congregational singing, where the object contemplated is congregational worship. Whatever effects we must ascribe to music and song, they are enhanced by the union of hearts, leading to union of voices. Indeed, the union of voices strengthens the union of hearts, and throws the uniting and binding cord over those who are indifferent, and draws them within its circle of magic influence. “Sacred music,” says the St. Louis *Presbyterian*, “is not like prayer, in which, to avoid confusion, one must speak audibly, and all others silently unite; for its effect is heightened by the union of many voices. One individual may so sing as to produce strong emotions in the hearers; but he must be an uncommon singer. A few persons, as in a choir, may produce a powerful impression on an audience; but they must have sweeter voices, must select tunes of extraordinary melody, and must sing much better than most of our choirs. But let five hundred voices join in singing the same piece. The different parts may not be scientifically balanced; there may be some jarring; and they may not sing *soft* and *loud* according to the books; but the effect will be far greater upon any worshipping congregation. Most evidently God has made it the duty, as well as the privilege, of the *people* to join in this part of the service, and, in proportion as they fail to do so, sacred music is perverted, and ceases to be part of God’s worship.”

Such is also the judgment of the Westminster divines. “It is the duty of Christians,” says the directory for public worship, “to praise God publicly, by singing of Psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. In singing of Psalms, the voice to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with the understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody to the Lord.” Such was the judgment of Jonathan Edwards. “As it is the command of God that all should sing, so all should make conscience of learning to sing, as it is a thing that cannot be decently performed at all

without learning. Those, therefore, (where there is no natural inability) who neglect to *learn to sing, live in sin*, as they neglect what is necessary in order to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship." In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, according to Neal, a paper was laid before the Convocation, requesting "that the Psalms may be sung distinctly by the whole congregation; and that organs may be laid aside." The Right Honorable Sir Peter King, according to Hall (Gospel Worship), says, "As for the manner of the primitive singing, it was in good tune and concert, *all the people* bearing a part in it." And Buck, on the word *Psalmody*, states that "sometimes the whole assembly joined together, which was the *most ancient and general practice*."

Thus it appears that the advocates of congregational singing are only pleading for the revival of an ancient and primitive practice, against the innovation of the organ and the choir.

With reference to the practice of music and song, the world, in its own department, is in advance of the Church in hers, as in all other cases. The saying of our Lord is true here in the amplest degree: "The children of this world are wiser, in their generation, than the children of light." The children of mirth, in their festive hours; the company of sailors, devoted to their pleasures, after having escaped from the dangers of the sea; and others essentially of the world, would only provoke ridicule, was each one, when it is proposed to unite in the animating pleasure of song, to pull out his *book*, that the necessary exercise of *reading* may subserve his union in the exercise of *singing*. Still more absurd would the repetition of the song, line by line, and the consequent interruption to the music, appear to the most careless observer. In such a case, there is no need of argument, to *convince* every one that both pleasure and effect are sacrificed to indolence: that pleasure would cede her place to a painful sense of drudgery is what may be *felt*. No: the soldier, who celebrates his triumphs; the sailor, who commemorates the dangers and escapes of the sea; the lover, who sets forth the charms of the idol of his affections, must have his song by heart; and the joy, the animation, the impulsive power of song, are sought in the united notes of those, who are able to appreciate the subject, and understand the words in which it is expressed; who can give their whole powers to musical effort, because no exertion is requisite to call up the lines. If Dr. Watts had said that *devotion is flat*, and *all the springs of uneasiness* are touched within us, not because of "the matter and the words, to which we confine all our songs," but because we are *ignorant of both the matter and the words* we are singing, or are about to sing, there would be as good ground to sustain, as there is now to impugn, his sentiments upon the subject of Psalmody.

Go, Christian, go to the pleasure party, to the theatre, to the tavern, and learn how to honour the songs of Zion, and their author, in the use of them, by observing how the votaries of sensual enjoyment honour the songs of Burns, of Byron, and of Moore, and their authors. Go then to the men of the ages that are past, who felt that they were not their own, but a "purchased possession," bound to glorify God in their bodies and spirits. Step into an assembly of Christians of the fourth century, where "the women, the children, and the humblest mechanics, could repeat all the Psalms of David, and were thus at all times prepared to praise God, in any circumstances, in a form of his own inditing." (Apost. Con.) Put yourself under the conduct of Jerome, and he shall lead you to see Bethlehem and its environs. "Here you cannot walk out into the fields, but you will hear one, while he holds the plough, singing Hallelujahs; another, while he reaps, entertaining himself with Psalms; another, while he prunes the vines, singing some of the words of David. We have no other songs or ballads in this province." Ask Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus, of the following century, for information on this subject, and he will tell you, that "they that minded no other book of the Scriptures, yet had this (Book of Psalms) so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they are wont to recreate themselves by singing of those holy songs." Strada, the Jesuit, is represented by Witsius as saying, "That translation of Hymns," by Marot and Beza, "though abandoned and condemned by the Catholics, was zealously and pertinaciously retained by the heretics; and the custom of singing Psalms in the French language, according to the fashion of the Genevese, in companies, in places of public resort, and in shops, became, thenceforth, a peculiar characteristic of the heretics." A glorious characteristic truly! and one which they could not have displayed, if the eye must be fixed upon the book, if line after line must be parcelled out by one who reads for the accommodation of others, if they had not had the Psalms by heart.

It is of no small importance that the tune should be precisely adapted to the song. The selection of a tune cannot be left, without a demonstrable impropriety, to the discretion of a chorister, or precentor, however skilful. Again, we must pay a visit to the theatre, or the youthful frolic, for instruction. The same tune may be, yet seldom is, used in connection with different songs, except the song with which it was first used has become almost obsolete; but the same song is always sung in the same tune. The adaptation of the tune to the song is thus secured. When the song is announced, already we know the tune, and on the other hand, the utterance of the notes of a particular tune usually is sufficient to suggest the song. They are almost indissolubly associated. The union of different voices

is thus facilitated, and upon the mind, susceptible of the emotion, the song never fails to leave the impression intended. But to carry into the Church the lesson, which the children of the world teach, the time must have come, when the Songs of Zion shall fill the hearts of believers, as fully as "Scots wha hae, &c." the breast of the patriotic Scotchman, or "Home, Sweet Home," the man who seeks and enjoys his most refined and elevated temporal gratification, in the domestic circle. Moreover, as the character of some of the Psalms changes, as the song proceeds, from sorrow to joy, from deep depression to animation, such would require the application of the skill of the composer, to prepare a tune, whose successive parts should undergo transitions corresponding to the changes in the characteristics of the successive verses. These reforms accomplished, the house of worship shall, without forfeiting its true distinction, neutralise the temptations of the theatre; and songs of praise shall at once stir the affections and elevate them to their proper object. The occupation of the believer shall no more seem to the mere onlooker (whatever judgment he may form of its real nature), a heartless and joyless service. Family exercises will then demand the song to complete the feast of faith and love. There would be no more a mere form of words, but something to quicken dead hearts, and rouse slumbering ones, in such lines as—

Whom have I, in the heavens high,
But thee, O Lord, alone:
And in the earth whom I desire,
Beside thee there is none.

As thousands forget the Scotticisms of Chalmers, in the fervour of an eloquence that rose above nationality; much more would the sometimes rough verses of Rouse be unobserved, while the soul is brought under the influence of the very spirit of the true poet, whom God taught and not man.

NOTE P.—Page 143.

For an exhibition of the errors and absurdities to be found in our most popular Hymns, the reader may consult an interesting work by J. Smith, M. A., of Glasgow, Scotland, entitled "Public Worship, or Praise, Prayer, and Preaching." He is one of the many who seem afraid to acknowledge, that the difficulty of exhibiting an unexceptionable Hymn Book, for the use of the Church, amounts to an impossibility, in the hands of an uninspired writer; as the acknowledgment would virtually recognise the obligation to exclude every uninspired song from the sanctuary.







